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TERRY EASTLAND • WILLIAM KRISTOL

# the weekly Standard

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# THE CELEBRITY CULTURE

By Joseph Epstein

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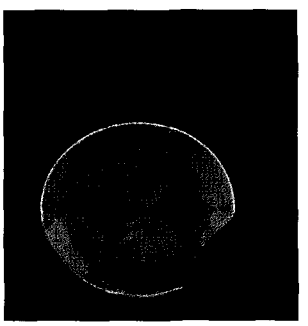

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# Greenspan Chooses a Successor?

Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan, who retires in January, is the master of monetary policy and probably the greatest Fed boss ever. But his expertise in the field of personnel leaves a lot to be desired. In 2000, it was Greenspan who helped persuade George W. Bush to hire Paul O'Neill as his treasury secretary. He said O'Neill would be a world-class cabinet member. O'Neill turned out to be an embarrassment. He opposed Bush's economic policy, especially tax cuts. And after he was fired, he wrote a book trashing the president.

Now Greenspan is at it again. He has recommended to the White House that either Roger Ferguson or Donald Kohn, both current Fed board governors, be tapped as his successor as Fed chairman. Both are highly skeptical of Bush's tax cuts, despite the strong economic recovery the cuts have spurred. Both could be expected to continue raising interest rates, in part to punish the president for not raising taxes and failing, in their view, to pay enough attention to the budget deficit. Their likely idea of a tacit deal next year with the White House: You raise taxes, we'll stop boosting rates.

Ferguson is a Democrat appointed to the board by President Clinton. He is a protégé of Clinton's two treasury secretaries, Robert Rubin and Larry Summers. His wife, the newly appointed Democratic commissioner at the Securities and Exchange Commission, is lionized by pro-regulation, liberal staffers on Capitol Hill.

Kohn is a former staffer who has spent his career at the Fed and was elevated to the board by Bush on Greenspan's recommendation. His loyalty to the powerful Fed staff is unstinting, which means he is no fan of Bush fiscal policy. His appointment to replace Greenspan would ensure American monetary policy would be narrowly defined, largely by Fed bureaucrats.

The worst case scenario would be an economic downturn caused by the Fed's "overshooting" in its desire to curb inflation by imposing too many interest rate hikes. This is what befell Bush's father, the first President Bush. Guess who the Fed would blame with Ferguson or Kohn at the helm? Not the Fed itself, but George W. Bush for not raising taxes, and doing so fast enough to address the deficit. ♦

## Dear Judy, How's Your Aspen?

Washington insiders were agog last week at the letter written by Vice President Cheney's chief of staff, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, to jailed *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller, which was said to have figured prominently in her decision finally to agree to testify before the grand jury investigating the leak of CIA agent Valerie Plame's name to the media in the summer of 2003. After the letter was leaked to and subsequently published by the *Times*, *Slate*'s Mickey Kaus, among others, speculated that Libby might have been sending coded messages to Miller about how she should testify, especially in the letter's concluding lines:

"Dear Judy, . . . You went to jail in the summer. It is fall now. You will have stories to cover—Iraqi elections and suicide bombers, biological threats and the Iranian nuclear program. Out West, where you vacation, the aspens will be turning. They turn in clusters, because their roots connect them. Come back to work—and life."

THE SCRAPBOOK's theory, for what it's worth, is that this was just literary flair. Not widely known is the fact that Libby, besides being Cheney's right hand man, is also the author of a highly acclaimed 1996 novel, *The Apprentice*.

Adding credence to the "literary" explanation is another piece of Miller's prison correspondence, apparently from a little known White House official, one Matt Arnold, obtained last week by THE SCRAPBOOK as we were going to press. While we have been unable to vouch for its authenticity, we thought it worth reprinting for the prose alone:

*Dear Judy,*

*The sea is calm tonight. The Coalition forces are on full alert. The tide is full, the moon lies fair upon the straits. We are encouraged by the North Korean response to our latest proposal. On the French coast the light gleams and is gone. We remain deeply concerned about the nature of the Iranian nuclear program. The cliffs of England stand, glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay. Here at the White House, the work of erecting Jersey barriers goes on. Come to the window, sweet is the night air!*

*Ah, Judy, let us be true to one another! I am authorized to inform you that there was no coercion involved in my release of our confidentiality agreement. For the world, which seems to lie before us like a land of dreams, so various, so beautiful, so new, hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain. While the president is preparing his agenda for the forthcoming G-8 conference, there is growing concern about disparities between current revenue projections and the anticipated costs of post-Katrina assistance and construction. And we are here as on a darkling plain, swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night.* ♦



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## Village Idiom

Democratic party chairman and all-around gentleman Howard Dean, during an interview last Wednesday on MSNBC's *Hardball*, promises not to make an advance on Supreme Court nominee Harriet Miers until sometime after the first date:

> CHRIS MATTHEWS: Do you believe that the president can claim executive privilege?
>
> HOWARD DEAN: Well, certainly the president can claim executive privilege. But, in this case, I think with a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court, you can't play, you know, hide the salami, or whatever it's called. You have got to go out there and say something about this woman. She's going to get a 20- or 30-year appointment to influence America. We deserve to know something about her.

And, truthfully, we deserve to know less about Howard Dean. ♦

## Happy Birthday to Them

It would be difficult to think of modern conservatism without *National Review* and, in particular, its founding editor, William F. Buckley Jr. When he and his merry band of pioneers established *NR* 50 years ago, Ike was in the Oval Office; the Democrats controlled Congress and the statehouses, the outcome of the Cold War remained in doubt, and the world of ideas—in social and cultural policy, foreign affairs, and economics—was dominated by liberals. A half-century later, things are hardly perfect, but the landscape is utterly, and permanently, transformed.

With their reservoirs of wit, erudition, energy, and wisdom, the editors and writers of *National Review* pushed conservatism out of the Slough of Despond and helped create the world of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, of grassroots revolts, political action, and a movement that is robust, varied, and flourishing. Buckley and crew were deservedly toasted by the president at the White House last week for their accomplishments. We look forward to the centennial. ♦

## Whatever

A correction from the September 29 *New York Times*:

> The About New York column yesterday, about an imagined conversation with God at a Manhattan diner, referred incorrectly to the Bible to which the thickness of the menu was likened. It is the King James Version, not St. James.

According to a source at the *Times*, efforts to confirm the existence of a more recent Bible translation by veteran television actress Susan St. James, costar of NBC's early 1970s series *McMillan and Wife*, have so far proved unsuccessful. ♦



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# Casual

## Freaky Tiki

There aren't many good places to get lost anymore, but I know of one near where I live. It's deep in southern Maryland's Calvert County, past the steamed-crab stands and empty tobacco barns, which are fast losing ground to tanning salons, "Embroid Me" shops, and other strip-mall abscesses. Just north of Solomon's Island, where the Patuxent River feeds the Chesapeake Bay, you'll see the sign for Vera's White Sands restaurant.

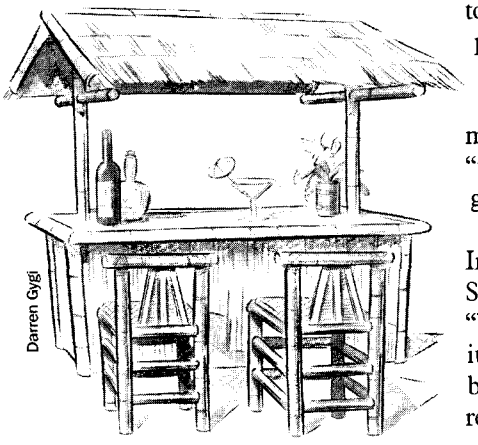
It's large and pink, with palm trees, and features the white-haired proprietor, Vera Freeman, in an exotic gown and Isis-like headgear, holding a martini glass. She looks right out of old Hollywood. And in fact, she is, sort of. The former aspiring dancer, who lived next to Hopalong Cassidy and fraternized with Bing Crosby, came here from there in the '50s, along with her late husband Doc, a real estate tycoon and "optometrist to the stars."

On St. Leonard's Creek, they set up a marina/restaurant that doubles as a Polynesian paradise, albeit one that's now down at the heels. Her incongruous Taj-Mahal knockoff of a house sits across the restaurant's weed-strewn parking lot. Her Silver Cloud Rolls Royce is under a tarp, and she no longer swims in the oval indoor pool set in the marble floor of her living room.

The restaurant is a quarter full on a good night. Still, there's something about it. I have my young kids convinced it's "the magic place," though admittedly they're easy marks. The little suckers also believe that Santa hibernates in an igloo, and that I can remove my thumb with remedial-magician sleight-of-hand. But this time, I'm not so sure I'm lying.

Perched on a bluff overlooking the creek, Vera's is an overgrown Tiki hut, gleaming in the conch-shell pink that lacquers Vera's lips. Outdoors, banana trees compete for space with Easter Island statues, Tiki totems, and the shell of a 487-pound man-eating clam, billed as the largest ever recovered, from the Philippines to Borneo.

Walking through the Tiki-headed doors is like falling into another dimension, a living Gauguin painting. It feels like a place where Tahitian nymphs should take your order in


Darren Gygi

coconut-shell bikinis, where Captain Bligh and Don the Beachcomber could become drinking buddies over Mai Tai's, where sacrificial virgins are cooked in volcanoes, preferably with a pineapple and mango-chutney glaze.

My kids squeeze into a booth that is a thatched cabana. They jam leis into their water glasses and stick drink umbrellas in their ears, while my wife and I watch blue herons pick baitfish out of the marsh. The sun sets perfectly through the panoramic windows, as if it were on the payroll. The food is entirely beside the point. The stuffed shrimp tastes like a scoop of dough. And the crabcakes look like they've had chemotherapy, suffering by comparison with those at Stoney's in nearby Broomes Island, which are the best in Maryland and, by extension, the world.

But the cocktails are tall and strong. I order the "Mystery Drink," a coconut-and-something-or-other concoction. Under questioning, my waitress refuses to give up the goods. "That would ruin the mystery," she says. And mystery is what the restaurant turns on. It's a place that reveals itself slowly, with every corner, from the leopard-skin bar, to the Peacock room, stacked with artifacts and curios from Vera's world travels: an 8-foot Kenyan giraffe, a South Pacific fertility goddess with ruby nipples, a mermaid canoe made out of seashells that hangs from the ceiling, Bamboo Room tables fashioned from the hatches of old sailing vessels and inlaid with pieces of eight.

Vera's is so awe-inspiring it prompted house piano player Sharon Marman to "leave my job as a budget analyst to pursue my dream of music and selling Mary Kay." Sharon plays some Beyoncé if a prom party comes in, but mostly she sticks to the old tunes, since "that's what Miss Vera wants." Vera's general manager and all-purpose valet, Dr. Selvin Kumar, who hails from India, has even cast his sentiments into Song-of-Songs-like acrostic poetry: "**V**irtuous **E**verlasting **R**oyal **A**quarius." (Kumar also self-published a biography of Tom Parran, a favorite regular and limo-company owner.)

When I interview Vera, who wears an ornate gown and gold-coin headpiece, she won't disclose her age. But time's ravages leave her unable to finish many of the stories she's often told. She's also driven to distraction by an armored knight standing in the corner, which she brought back from Barcelona. Vera is convinced he's moving. "Did you see that?" she says repeatedly, as she eats caviar off Ritz crackers, while sipping her patented martini (just olives and gin).

She's not scared, but impishly delighted. So I check it out to humor her. Unless there's a midget squatting in the armor's greave, the knight, in all likelihood, is staying put. But as Vera adjourns to take a nap, I tell her I'll keep an eye on him anyway. It'd be a sin to ruin the mystery.

**Matt Labash**



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## Academic Disputations

Having taught in institutions of higher learning from 1960 to 2001, I can report that James Piereson's account of the universities' transition from liberalism to leftism is both insightful and generally accurate ("The Left University," Oct. 3). I do, however, want to quibble with his assignment of blame. Faculty governance was the rule in the 1950s, but control was seized by the universities' administrative officers in the 1970s. To carry out federal mandates on affirmative action, these administrators took two steps. First they pressured existing departments to hire more blacks and women. Then, when this measure did not yield the numbers wanted, they created whole new departments and programs staffed entirely by favored minority groups.

Lacking the customary credentials, the new faculty in these departments proceeded to argue that the usual standards served only to perpetuate white patriarchy. Thus were born the commitment to "diversity" and the rationale called "multiculturalism." Codes to restrict criticism would come later, along with squadrons of "diversity officers." It is true that a few radical members of the faculty actively supported this transformation from the beginning, and their numbers increased as time went on. As a consequence, many departments of social science and literature are now entirely dominated by leftist radicals.

The only part the majority of faculty played in this revolution, however, was to have let it happen, partly because they figured they could not stem the tide and would drown trying, partly because they preferred to spend their energies on the research and teaching by which they would be salaried and promoted. To say so, of course, is not to absolve them of all blame, but perhaps it diminishes their guilt a little bit.

Max Hocutt
*Northport, AL*

To characterize the entire university as being "liberal" because of some vast left-wing conspiracy fails to explain how this argument applies to the huge sectors of the academy that deal with physics, mathematics, biology, architecture, engineering, medicine, dentistry, etc. Even if one accepts that 72 percent of mathematicians hold liberal views, how is their presentation of a quadratic equation affected by their liberal bias? Furthermore, how does one increase the proportion of conservatives in, say, the comparative anatomy or genetics department, if their view is that "intelligent design" makes the very purpose of such departments moot?

Could it be that many conservative ideas actually don't hold up under the intense critical analysis of the university? Or perhaps, could the paucity of conservatives on campus be in part because most conservatives are more interested in the glitter of the financial marketplace than the marketplace of ideas—with its relatively meager financial rewards?

Carl Mezoff
*Stamford, CT*

James Piereson presents a history of the evolution of the American university into the seemingly leftist bastion he thinks it is today. Although Piereson refers to the Founding Fathers and their desire for a "republic of letters" in America, he overlooks one of the earliest and most important proponents of a distinctively American education—Dr. Benjamin Rush, an ardent revolutionary, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and founder of several American universities, including my own Dickinson College.

Piereson incorrectly attributes the politicization of American colleges and universities to the emergence of the modern liberal movement in the late 19th and early 20th century. Politicization of higher education by various parties is unfortunately a longstanding American tradition. Rush fiercely criticized the first president and the faculty of Dickinson College in the early 1800s for corrupting students' minds with "Federalist" ideology.

It was well known that other colleges and universities, before and immediately after the Revolution, also were criticized for advancing political ideologies—for or against the war with England, Federalist or Anti-Federalist.

Piereson asserts that the Founding Fathers intended for American higher education to be "a republic of letters"—classically focused on broad learning in history and philosophy and the study of ancient languages and politics "in order to apply the lessons of the past to the practical problems of the present." Piereson wishes for the resurrection of a republic of letters in hopes that it will improve America.

From the very beginning, Rush envisioned an American approach to education that would not simply duplicate "the republic of letters" as it was understood for centuries in England (based on an invincible admiration of the classical world) and even by his good friend Thomas Jefferson. In fact, Rush judged Jefferson on certain educational issues to be too greatly enamored of the "Old World" and not fully prepared to move into the "New." For Rush, the English classical curriculum mimicked by the colonial American universities before the Revolution was moribund, "unchanged for 250 years," and little but "monkish studies"—thus not truly American in content or spirit.

A distinctively American college for Rush had to be based on a dynamic liberal education—the unfettered nonpolitical pursuit of truth and knowledge that would ultimately be entrepreneurial and useful. He argued vociferously for the study of modern languages, rather than Latin and Greek.

He also insisted on the inclusion of the modern sciences—particularly chemistry—knowing that they would create new knowledge necessary to fuel industry and commerce, the economic and competitive foundation of the new nation. And he simultaneously acknowledged the incompleteness of the American democratic experiment at its founding and called for the study of Native American languages and cultures and advocated broader opportunities for women and African Americans. Change, inclusiveness, and adaptability were key components of



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the earliest conceptions of a distinctively American education, according to Dr. Rush.

Let us then fully appreciate this aspiration for a distinctively American higher education by this true patriot and founder of the country and contrast it with Piereson's incomplete and selective framing of what he calls "the left university." For in seeking to disclose and disarm a pervasive "left university," by returning to the "republic of letters," Piereson would have us, educationally at least, still within the oppressive embrace of Europe.

WILLIAM G. DURDEN
*President, Dickinson College*
*Carlisle, PA*


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## WHO'S THE MALINGERER?

IN REVIEWING MY BOOK *100 People Who Are Screwing Up America* ("Public Nuisances," Oct. 3), Joe Queenan confirms his well-earned reputation as a consummate wisecracker and displays his trademark charm by calling me a "seasoned malingerer"—a compliment I appreciate (even if I don't quite understand it), since with Queenan it could have been a lot worse.

Queenan's main gripe seems to be that I included on the list of those who are cheapening our culture a number of culprits he does not think should have ever made the cut. He writes, for example, that I attack "academics who are not household names." So? These are people who bash America every chance they get—and also teach our kids at some prestigious universities. Maybe it's me, but I think they're doing plenty of harm, even if they're not as well known as J-Lo.

He's also unhappy because I attack an Internet blogger that "no one has ever heard of." He's referring to Markos Moulitsas, a guy who runs one of the busiest and nastiest left-wing sites on the web (*www.DailyKos.com*). After four American civilian contractors in Iraq were shot, burned, and mutilated before their dead bodies were hung from a bridge, "Kos" wrote, "I feel nothing over the death of the mercenaries. . . . Screw them."

And then there's Matthew Lesko. In case you don't know, he's the ninny who wears lime green suits covered with question marks and shows up in late night cable TV commercials telling us that the government has loads of "free money for you!" What kind of ridiculous list is this, Queenan wonders, if a nitwit like Lesko is on it?

As in the other cases, though, Queenan misses the point. Matthew Lesko isn't simply annoying. As I write in the book, he "caters to a mindset that believes there's not only a free lunch, but free dinner, and free midnight snacks, and a takeout bag if you're still hungry later on." Hey, I never said he was Osama bin Laden or some serial killer. And besides, he's No. 99 on the list.

Last, I think we need a rule—maybe a federal law—that says if you're going to review a book you have to actually read it first—the whole thing, not just a little here and a little there. I mention this, because in his entire piece, Queenan does not devote so much as one word to the central premise of the book: that our culture is a lot meaner and angrier and more vulgar than it used to be. Not a word!

Years ago, I interviewed Joe when I was at CBS News. I liked him and thought he was smart and funny. Now, seeing him completely ignore the main point of the book, I can't help but wonder: Who's the real "seasoned malingerer" here?

BERNARD GOLDBERG
*Miami, FL*

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the weekly Standard

# What Is To Be Done?

It's been a bad week for the Bush administration—but, in a way, a not-so-bad week for American conservatism. George W. Bush's nomination of White House Counsel Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court was at best an error, at worst a disaster. There is no need now to elaborate on Bush's error. He has put up an unknown and undistinguished figure for an opening that conservatives worked for a generation to see filled with a jurist of high distinction. There is a gaping disproportion between the stakes associated with this vacancy and the stature of the person nominated to fill it.

But the reaction of conservatives to this deeply disheartening move by a president they otherwise support and admire has been impressive. There has been an extraordinarily energetic and vigorous debate among conservatives as to what stance to take towards the Miers nomination, a debate that does the conservative movement proud. The stern critics of the nomination have, in my admittedly biased judgment, pretty much routed the half-hearted defenders. In the vigor of their arguments, and in their willingness to speak uncomfortable truths, conservatives have shown that they remain a morally serious and intellectually credible force in American politics.

One should add that some of the defenses of the president have been spirited as well—and in fairness to the defenders of the Miers nomination, they really were not given all that much to work with by the White House. Consider this game effort from one former Bush staffer:

> Harriet used to keep a humidor full of M&M's in her West Wing office. It wasn't a huge secret. She'd stash some boxes of the coveted red, white, and blue M&M's in specially made boxes bearing George W. Bush's reprinted signature. Her door was always open and the M&M's were always available. I dared ask one time why they were there. Her answer: "I like M&M's, and I like sharing."

Well, it can be said, such anecdotes speak to the character of the nominee. And in matters of justice, character counts.

So what now? Bush has made this unfortunate nomination. What is to be done? The best alternative would be for Miers to withdraw. Is such an idea out of the question? It should not be. She has not aspired all of her life or even until very recently to serve on the Supreme Court. And her nomination has hurt the president whom she came to Washington to serve. Would a withdrawal be an embarrassment to the president? Sure. But the embarrassment would fade. Linda Chavez at the beginning of the first term, and Bernard Kerik at the beginning of the second, withdrew their nominations for cabinet positions and there was no lasting effect. In this case, Miers could continue to serve the president as White House counsel. The president's aides would explain that he miscalculated out of loyalty and admiration for her personal qualities. And he could quickly nominate a serious, conservative, and well-qualified candidate for the court vacancy.

Failing that, we are headed towards hearings that will in no way resemble the recent triumph of John Roberts. These hearings will not be easy for Miers, as she will have to at once demonstrate a real knowledge of constitutional jurisprudence, reassure conservative constitutionalists, and presumably placate Democrats as well. Conservative senators will for the most part withhold judgment until the hearings are completed. Many have already said as much, leaving open the possibility of a no vote in the event things do not go well. It would be awkward, of course, if a combination of conservative and Democratic votes defeated Miers. But this is a moment where it is more important that conservatives stand for core principles than that they stand with the president.

It may be—we can certainly hope—that Miers will be very impressive and that conservatives can support her in good conscience. But if not, they will be doing a favor to the conservative cause, the Republican party, and—believe it or not—the final three years of the Bush administration by voting no on Miers's confirmation. Conservative congressional opposition to the 1990 budget deal was a key to Republican success in 1994—and the absence of such opposition would not have helped the first President Bush in 1992 anyway. Conservative opposition to Nixon's policy of détente was crucial to laying the groundwork for Ronald Reagan's success in 1980—and didn't appreciably hamper Gerald Ford's already uphill struggle in 1976 in any case. This is a time when loyalty to principle has to trump loyalty to the president.

President Bush's nomination of Harriet Miers was an out-of-the-blue act of loyalty to a longtime staffer. Is it too much to hope that she might reciprocate by withdrawing, thereby sparing her boss the chance of lasting damage to his legacy that her appointment to the Supreme Court may well represent?

—*William Kristol*



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# A Failure to Communicate

## Washington is more of a quagmire than Iraq.

**BY FRED BARNES**

AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE on October 4, President Bush took a question about the number of Iraqi military units engaged in fighting insurgents and terrorists. Bush, the reporter noted, had once said there were 100 Iraqi battalions in combat "across the nation." But in an appearance on Capitol Hill, two U.S. Army generals had recently said "there's only one battle-ready battalion" of Iraqi soldiers, according to the reporter. "Something is not adding up here."

Bush offered only a little help in reconciling the numbers. "Right now there are over 80 [Iraqi] battalions fighting alongside coalition troops," he said. "There are over 30 Iraqi battalions in the lead. And that is substantial progress from the way the world was a year ago." But what about the single "battle-ready" unit of Iraqi troops? Bush didn't say.

The result was confusion, as with so much else about Iraq when viewed from Washington. This is not solely the fault of a press corps unsympathetic to the Bush administration and the war in Iraq. The president and the generals had tried to say the same thing about Iraqi troops, but ended up sounding like they were contradicting each other. Reporters, most of them anyway, didn't go to the trouble of straightening out the numbers.

This was not the only recent instance of unnecessary confusion about what's happening in Iraq. Take the constant flow of advice from Washington figures and organizations on military strategy. Many insist they have a plan for Iraq while the Bush administration doesn't. In truth, their advice often consists of exactly what the military is already doing. Furthermore, the administration does have a strategy for winning, but it hasn't gotten that fact across in Washington or around the country.

The repercussions of these communications failures are serious. Impressive strides have been made in recent months on the political and military tracks in Iraq. Sunnis who boycotted the January 30 election are registering in droves to vote in the referendum on the new constitution on October 15 and the parliamentary election on December 15. Progress against the insurgents and terrorists has been even more striking. But few people know about these gains.

At the same time—basically over the summer—public support for the intervention in Iraq and for the broader war on terror fell sharply. And that, understandably, alarmed the White House. The response was a series of speeches last week on Iraq and terror by Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The thrust of these addresses was that terror attacks by Islamic extremists remain a threat and that the best way to thwart the terrorists is by defeating them in Iraq.

The speeches were initially scheduled for August and early September, but were postponed because of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In his address, Bush went out of his way to knock down the notion that the American presence in Iraq "has somehow caused or triggered the rage of radicals." The United States, he noted, was "not in Iraq on September the 11th, 2001, and al Qaeda attacked us anyway. The hatred of the radicals existed before Iraq was an issue and it will exist after Iraq is no longer an excuse."

But what about that single "battle-ready" battalion of Iraqis? Bush didn't broach the subject, but the man in charge of training Iraqi soldiers, Gen. David Petraeus, did. Speaking at the Pentagon the day before Bush's speech, Petraeus cleared up the troop numbers, but only after weeks of confusion. He got minimal media coverage. "There are now over 197,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces," he said. And "there are over 115 police and army combat battalions in the fight."

The mixup came over the four categories that measure the level of independence of Iraqi forces. About 80 battalions "are assessed as fighting alongside our forces," Petraeus said. Bush got that right. They belong to category three. Only one battalion needs "no coalition assistance whatsoever—i.e., fully independent." That's category one. A "substantial number" of another 35 "have their own areas of operation," but fight with American soldiers embedded in their units. These "allow coalition units to focus elsewhere or eventually to go home." They comprise category two. So Iraqi battalions rated one, two, and three add up to roughly 115 "battle-ready" units—not one. Category four troops aren't ready for combat.

Many groups and individuals have accused the administration of having no plan for victory in Iraq. They are not being disingenuous. They are honestly—and through no fault of their own—in the dark, as are millions of Americans.

So the Democratic Leadership Council, explaining "what to do now in Iraq," said "the primary responsibility of defending" Iraq should be shifted to the Iraqi military. On the political front, the DLC said, an effort should be made to win Sunni support for the new government. The DLC offered this advice just a month ago. In June, Senator Joe Biden, the ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, urged the administration to emphasize the training of officers in the Iraqi army. "That's the only way, in

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my view, to stand up ultimately an Iraqi military when it comes under fire," he said in a speech to the Brookings Institution. All of this is good advice, and all these recommendations were adopted months ago by the U.S. military in Iraq.

The administration indeed has a plan: Weaken the Sunni insurgents and turn the job of defeating them over to Iraqis; isolate the Islamic jihadists and let American Special Forces commandos deal with them; and, finally, woo Sunnis to the new government through the appeal of democracy. It's a simple plan, and at the moment it's working.

Former president Bill Clinton said last week that Iraq looks like "a quagmire." He's wrong. On the subject of Iraq, it's Washington that looks more like a quagmire. That was true in Vietnam, too. By the mid-1970s, America was winning in Vietnam, but support in Washington and the country had plummeted. Now we're winning in Iraq and beginning to lose at home. That's a recipe for defeat. ♦

# Blackpool Blues

## The Tories meet to select Labour's next victim.

**BY IRWIN M. STELZER**

*Blackpool*

TWO WEEKS AGO, Brighton for the annual conference of Tony Blair's Labour party. Last week, Blackpool for the conference of a Conservative party desperately seeking a leader and policies to cope with Blair and his likely successor, Gordon Brown. Brighton is a rather genteel, middle class, channelside city, home to many retirees; Blackpool is a gritty, seaside resort catering to working class Brits, 11 million of whom brave the often-nasty weather to avail themselves of the cheap hotels, entertainments (bingo parlors open at noon, lines form at 11 A.M.), down-market bars, and concessions on its famous Pleasure Beach. Blackpool, one reporter said, is the only town he has been in that has two pawn shops on one street.

I mention this not to mock those who find pleasure in Blackpool's offerings. Rather, it is to point out that this town—in which average earnings are about 25 percent below the national average, the lifespan some three years shorter than in Britain as a whole, and 13 percent of the working-age population is on disability—once welcomed the conferences of Labour, too. But a few years ago, New Labour, now more the party of a Blair-like professional class than of horny-handed toilers in mines and mills, decided that Blackpool was too, er, shabby for its newly elevated tastes, and moved on to posher towns such as Bournemouth and Brighton and, next year, thriving Manchester. The Tories, meanwhile, ever fearful of being identified as the party of the rich—a former leader last week exhorted them to abandon their representation of society's "fat cats"—feel they must stick it out in Blackpool, a town that most of their leaders would never consider visiting except under the compulsion of a conference.

The only thing the Tories and Blackpool have in common is decline. The Conservative party has seen its vote total sink from 14 million in 1992 to 9 million earlier this year. This decline is particularly galling to a party that once was the mightiest electoral machine in the Western world—"the natural party of government" as it came to be regarded both by supporters and opponents. So its members arrived in Blackpool determined to reverse its post-Thatcher decline. No easy chore.

For one thing, it was the Tory members of parliament who assassinated Margaret Thatcher when they deemed her usefulness to them to be at end. Since then, the assassins have turned on each other and waged war on a succession of their own leaders with a singlemindedness that left little energy for fighting Labour.

For another, the Tories have never agreed on a policy towards Europe. One faction supports deeper integration and greater power for the Brussels bureaucracy, and backed Blair's unsuccessful drive to abandon the pound in favor of the euro. Ken Clarke, one of the candidates for the Tory leadership, is trying to make members forget his ardent support of the euro and the entire European "project."

Opposing the Tory europhiles, we have the Tory euroskeptics, eager to recapture some of the powers ceded to the E.U. by Blair. Clearly in the

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majority, this faction now more than ever feels it has got it right: Europe's Human Rights Act, which they would never have allowed Britain to adopt, is tying Blair's hands as he attempts to crack down on terrorism. It seems that the act allows Britain's judges to prevent him from deporting terrorists if their country of origin might treat them roughly on their return. The darling of the euroskeptics is Liam Fox, a Conservative's conservative who supports U.S. foreign policy, most particularly the war in Iraq.

The party is also racked by unremitting warfare between its "modernizers" and its "right wing." The former want to make the Conservative party more attractive to single moms, gays, ethnic minorities, and urban voters. The largely rural, heavily female "blue-rinse set" that has historically been the backbone of the party does not exactly find these modernizers understandable, much less congenial. They speak the language of "family values," oppose political correctness, see law and order as a top priority, and want to give teachers greater disciplinary powers.

Finally, the Tory party has had trouble making up its mind about America. The *Times* (of London) reported, "The revival of the 'Little Englander' branch of the Tories, imbued with a dark anti-Americanism inspired by cultural snobbery, has been one of the most disturbing events of the past Parliament."

Cultural snobbery is not the worst obstacle for Americans eager to retain the historic relationship with our most reliable ally. It is opposition by leading Tories to American foreign policy. Last month, in Brighton, Tony Blair told his party that Britain's future lies in continuing its special relationship with the United States. Last week in Blackpool, Clarke, an old Tory warhorse who is violently opposed to the war in Iraq, was running strong, a tribute to the ability of his earthy, cigar-smoking, beer-swilling habits and his position on Iraq to overcome his history of europhilia. Joining him in the anti-American, antiwar camp was a dark-horse contender and former defense minister, Malcolm Rifkind, a self-styled "One Nation Tory" who believes that the "special relationship" is a fiction created by America to control British foreign policy. He would not travel down what he sees as that one-way street.

These leadership candidates are not the only important Tories who would distance their country from Washington. Boris Johnson, a Tory MP who also edits the *Spectator*, and who was described to me as the darling of the upper-income trendier set, used a newspaper column to label "George Dubya Bush" the "cross-eyed Texan warmonger," and took to the pages of the left-wing *New Statesman* to declare, "If I were an Iranian politician, I am afraid I would regard it as my patriotic duty to equip my country, as fast as possible, with a nuclear deterrent against Israel and the Pentagon."

*The Tories are trying to decide what it means to be a conservative party, circa 2005. Those who looked to the U.S. model have been shaken by the fall in Bush's popularity.*

And Alan Duncan, the party's spokesman on transportation policy, regaled the audience with his recollection of a pleasurable stay at Harvard some 25 years ago, when a man he identifies in his printed text as "Zbig Breshynski" told a Kennedy School audience, "The United States will never have a grown-up foreign policy until it learns to lose its obsession with Cuba." It would be a mistake, said Duncan, to "sacrifice the dignity and confidence of Britain by thinking that all our foreign policy needs to be is an off-the-shelf replica of America's."

Don't let the anti-Americanism upset you, advised a sympathetic MP. "Only about one-third of the party hates America." The other two-thirds just oppose U.S. foreign policy and the president. Nothing personal, and Disney World is a great place to take the kids.

Of course, the Tory party is so far from being electable that its anti-Americanism is more a painful reminder of the great days of the Thatcher-Reagan love-in than a significant threat to the alliance. Even the Tory leadership privately concedes that it has little chance to return to power when it faces Blair's almost-certain successor, Gordon Brown, probably in 2009. Indeed, one very pro-American former leader told me at a private luncheon that he wonders whether his party will even exist after the drubbing it will probably take at that time.

That may be unduly pessimistic. The Tories are trying to decide just what it means to be a conservative party, circa 2005. Those who looked to the U.S. model have been shaken by the fall in Bush's popularity, which they take to mean that conservatism is in decline. What they see as the fiscal mess in America has made this party of smaller government even more reluctant to advocate tax cuts, a policy they have always feared would open them to the charge that they plan to gut the health service in order to fund tax cuts for the rich.

I attended what is known as a tax-policy "fringe meeting," a sort of public seminar in which party notables debate policy issues and then take questions from the always-lively audiences. One speaker said that if elected, "we will not realistically be able to cut taxes"; another—the party's shadow Minister for Young People (I kid you not)—hopes supply-side reforms will make tax cuts possible, "but not right now"; still another ruled out tax cuts for "five-to-ten years" after the party returns to power. Not for these conservatives the Irving Kristol



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admonition: policy first, bookkeeping later.

A notable exception was one contender for the leadership, the very-young-by-the-standards-of-the-Tory-party David Cameron (39 years old). In a speech that had more than a little hint of Ronald Reagan's "morning in America," he proposed that economic growth would create a larger pie, and that the increment could be shared between tax cuts and increased social spending. Separately, he supported the overthrow of Saddam and staying in Iraq until we get the job done.

Cameron is one of a group of younger members who are trying to do the hard work that they saw the conservative think tanks and small magazines of America do as a predicate to the election of Ronald Reagan and the onset of the conservative and neoconservative eras in America. They are studying a flat (well, flatter) tax; trying to figure out how to oppose the expansion of the state in a country in which voters are more risk-averse than Americans; seeking programs that will encourage entrepreneurship in a country more inclined to prefer egalitarianism and queuing than meritocracy and reliance on the market to allocate resources; and wondering how to parry a prime minister who has stolen the middle ground by melding calls for social justice with promises of reforms that would give consumers freedom to choose their kids' schools and their own health care facilities.

Many of these young MPs, some in the Cameron camp, some not, are ardent Atlanticists, and flit back and forth between think tanks in Washington and think tanks in London. They support U.S. policy in Iraq, attribute much of their party's anti-Bushism to snobbery, especially by that segment of their party that can't abide George W. Bush's inability to reach the rhetorical heights of, well, of the successive leaders of the Tory party who have managed with great eloquence to lead it into the electoral wilderness for going on a decade.

In Cameron's case, his willingness to study the U.S. model is unconcealed—he styles himself a compassionate conservative. He is determined to remove regulations that stifle economic growth, to rely more on private-sector "social entrepreneurs . . . whose solutions are working where the state is failing," and to attract younger people to the Tory banner without surrendering his belief that "marriage . . . [is] a great institution," and that the family is best able to provide the "stable, loving home" that children need.

It is a testimonial to the flexibility of politicians that after Cameron's speech roused the delegates and converted him from a longshot into a real contender, Duncan jumped from the bandwagon of his sinking favorite, David Davis, onto Cameron's. Strange that, since Duncan had one day earlier managed to work this gem into his speech: "The march of Christian fundamentalism may suit the politics of America, but it does not suit the politics of Britain, and we are not going to solve our party's plight by thinking we can just import it like that from the United States."

So all is not grim for Americans who remember the Tory party of Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher. The complicated selection process—the two candidates who get the most votes from their parliamentary colleagues then go before the 300,000 party members, who select the winner—might very well produce a candidate who is not viscerally anti-American, of which there are three: Cameron, Fox, and the sinking frontrunner, David Davis. But should the party decide that Ken Clarke or (less likely) Malcolm Rifkind is to be their leader, Tory support for Blair's policy of sticking with America in Iraq will be gone. That support has thus far enabled Blair to hold off the left of his own party, and keep British troops in Iraq. Remove it, and the pressure on the prime minister to declare victory and bring the troops home may well become irresistible. The outcome of this battle for the leadership of a long-out-of-power political party is of more than a little importance to America. ♦


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# Finding Forrester

## Is New Jersey ready for an incorruptible governor?

**BY DUNCAN CURRIE**

*Union City, New Jersey*

CAMPAIGNING against "corruption" in New Jersey is sort of like campaigning against Castro in Miami. It's bound to strike a chord among the natives. From Frank "I am the law" Hague and Harrison "Abscam" Williams to Bob Torricelli and Jim McGreevey, the Garden State has midwifed a murderers' row of political swindlers. Late-night comics have long enjoyed sending up the state's colorful history of graft, while sprinkling in a few organized-crime gags. But in the governor's race this year, the ethics issue is getting more airtime than usual. Quite simply, New Jersey Democrats have been swamped by a raft of scandals that would make even Tony Soprano blush.

One longtime Democrat, asked why he's backing Republican Doug Forrester for governor, doesn't mince words: "Corruption, corruption, and more corruption," says José "Cheito" Falto, an educator from Union City. Falto is one of the "Democrats for Forrester" now appearing in a handful of TV spots that feature a parade of Jersey Dems howling about their party's seedy track record.

Last week, Forrester, 52, spent a day courting Hispanics in Falto's hometown, just across the Hudson River from Manhattan. Joining him on his walking tour was Florida senator Mel Martinez, a Cuban-American Republican. Forrester had earlier been in Newark to protest construction of a new hockey arena for the state's NHL franchise, the New Jersey Devils, which will cost taxpayers at least $210 million.

"The arena is a classic example of a boondoggle," Forrester told me later that afternoon. It's also "an example of what is wrong in New Jersey." Originally slated as a $310-million project, it may have a final pricetag of $350 million or more. Forrester lodges several complaints. First, he says, the Devils have yet to pony up their share, some $100 million. Second, it's still unclear just how much the arena will cost taxpayers—and how those funds will be allocated. Third, there is no clamor among Newark's citizenry for a hockey rink, and the money would be better spent on tax relief and aiding the city's rotten public schools.

New Jersey senator Jon Corzine, the Democratic nominee for governor, has declared his own opposition to the arena deal. But unlike Forrester, he stops short of calling for a halt to the groundwork pending an investigation of its expenses. Corzine deems the whole brouhaha a local matter. It is a prickly subject for him. The arena's chief Democratic patron, five-term Newark mayor Sharpe James, wields great influence over the city's mostly minority—and reliably pro-Democrat—voters. Democrats depend on a healthy turnout in the state's largest city every election cycle, which James typically delivers.

But Corzine, 58, must strike a delicate balance: cozying up to his urban base in big cities like Newark, Trenton, Paterson, and Elizabeth without alienating moderate suburbanites. This is especially tricky in New Jersey, where more than half of the state's roughly 4.8 million registered voters are independents. Despite its well-earned reputation as a Democratic stronghold—Democrats control the governorship and both houses of the state legislature—New Jersey boasts an array of prosperous suburbs where voters tend to be fiscally conservative but socially liberal. These suburbs are where statewide races are won and lost. They tilted Republican during the 1980s—New Jersey went for Ronald Reagan twice and for George H.W. Bush in 1988—but swung into the Democratic column during the Clinton years over social issues.

Indeed, New Jersey is among the most fiercely pro-choice and anti-gun states in the country. Consider the fate of Bret Schundler, a conservative GOP maverick who waged a quixotic quest for the governor's mansion in 2001. Schundler, an ex-Wall Streeter turned mayor of Jersey City, possessed a wonkish command of topics like school vouchers and tax reform. But his opponent, Democrat Jim McGreevey, zinged him relentlessly over his pro-life views and support for gun rights. Schundler lost by a whopping 14 points.

Though Schundler has been a darling of national conservatives since his mayoral days, Forrester seems better suited to peel off New Jersey's swing voters. True, he lost badly in a 2002 Senate race. But like Sen. Corzine, Forrester is a self-made millionaire, which helps when buying airtime in the New York and Philadelphia media markets. And "he's a moderate who supports a woman's right to choose," as former New Jersey governor Tom Kean reminds voters in a new pro-Forrester TV ad. Kean, perhaps the state's most popular Republican, endorses Forrester as "one of the most honorable men I've ever known."

"The Tom Kean ad is really helping Doug Forrester," says Ingrid Reed, director of the New Jersey Project at Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics. "The abortion issue has always worked, in effect, for the Democrats." She also mentions another Forrester ad that introduces the GOP nominee alongside his wife. "I'm

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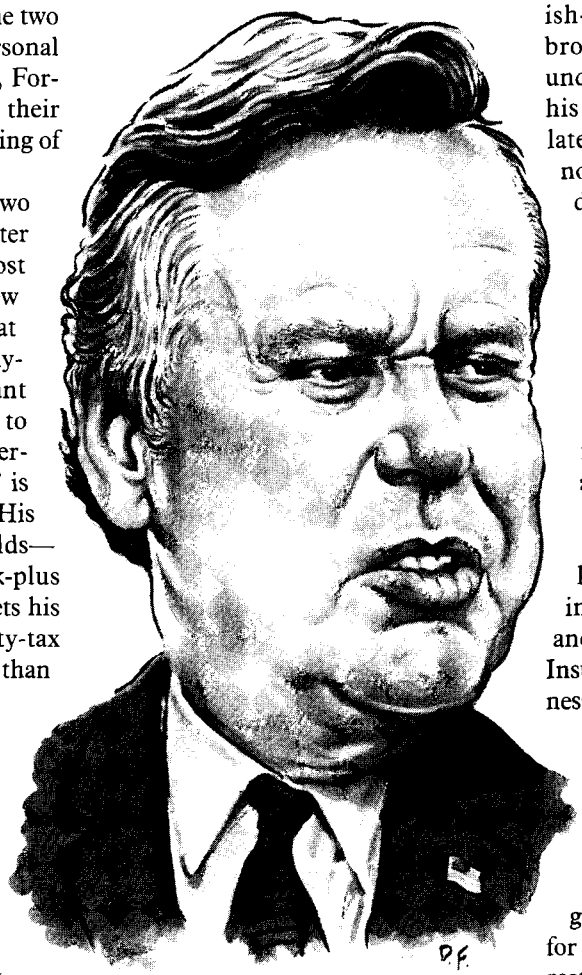
struck by how many people talk about it," Reed says of the pro-family ad.

A *Star-Ledger*/Rutgers-Eagleton survey from early September showed Corzine holding an eye-popping 18-point lead among likely voters. But over the past month, as more and more New Jerseyans have tuned in, and after Forrester performed well in a TV debate, that gap has closed. Most polls now give Corzine only a single-digit advantage, somewhere between 4 and 8 points. The campaign has accordingly turned nasty, with the two sides trading barbs over personal ethics. To keep the mud flying, Forrester and Corzine have tapped their flush war chests and put out a string of aggressive commercials.

At least three Corzine ads—two TV and one radio—link Forrester with President Bush, a most unflattering association in New Jersey. But the twin themes that have dominated the race are sky-high property taxes and rampant corruption. Forrester pledges to reduce property taxes by 30 percent over three years ("30 in 3" is the campaign's leading slogan). His plan would cover all households—including those in the $200k-plus income bracket. Corzine trumpets his own plan to soften the property-tax blow for "all those earning less than $200,000 per year."

If the Forrester proposal smacks of gimmickry, then the Corzine promise assumes a credulous electorate. Since 2001, the ex-Goldman Sachs chairman has compiled one of the most liberal, tax-happy paper trails in the Senate. For Corzine to now pose as a tax-slasher is (pardon the pun) rich. But then, as the Corzine camp might retort, Forrester jacked up property taxes while he was mayor of West Windsor (to pay for a new sewer system, Forrester explains).

Part of the reason New Jersey has the steepest property-tax rates in America is corruption—a connection of which voters seem increasingly aware. The litany of scandals that have plagued the state's Democrats in recent years could fill a juicy airport novel. In 2002, Sen. Bob Torricelli quit his reelection bid amidst charges of campaign-finance impropriety; his chief fundraiser went to prison. Two of former governor Jim McGreevey's top donors are now in jail, one for tax violations, fraud, and using a prostitute to tamper with a grand jury witness, the other for hatching an extortion scheme with the governor's alleged consent. Meanwhile, a slew of




**Doug Forrester**

McGreevey cronies abused the state's "pay to play" system of government contracting, and it turned out his appointee to lead the state police had ties to the Mafia. McGreevey himself resigned when the world learned of his homosexual affair—with an Israeli poet whom he tapped to head the state's homeland security efforts.

Since New Jersey has no lieutenant governor, McGreevey's successor was Richard Codey, president of the state Senate. Codey, who took office in November 2004, initially mulled running for a full term in 2005, before Corzine outmuscled him with a series of VIP endorsements. Corzine has vowed that his immense wealth—he is worth perhaps $300 million; he dropped a record $63 million to win a Senate seat in 2000—will ensure he is "unbought and unbossed" as governor. But his record is hardly blemish-free. This past August, news broke that Corzine had made an undisclosed loan of some $470,000 to his then-girlfriend, Carla Katz, and later forgave it. Which would mean nothing, except that Katz is president of New Jersey's biggest public-sector union.

Forrester has tried to make hay out of the Katz loan and other Corzine mini-scandals. But the Corzine forces have fired back in kind. They bang on about BeneCard Services, the Forrester-founded pharmacy benefits management company that has been sued for fraud. In addition, they note that Forrester may have broken the law by pumping money into state politics despite owning another firm, Heartland Fidelity Insurance, that does most of its business in New Jersey.

Whether these charges will neutralize Forrester's anticorruption message is unclear. On the one hand, voters are clearly fed up. And later this month, Sen. John McCain, a paladin of the clean-government warriors, will stump for Forrester. On the other hand, Forrester must overcome a widespread cynicism among New Jerseyans who feel *all* politicians are rascals. While polls show corruption to be a prime concern, they also indicate that voters don't believe either Forrester or Corzine can do much to drain the swamp. If true, that robs the GOP nominee of a signature issue—and it may leave him just shy of a victory in November. Indeed, the cynicism of the electorate could prove Corzine's salvation. ♦

Illustration by Drew Friedman



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# Wall Street Goes Wobbly

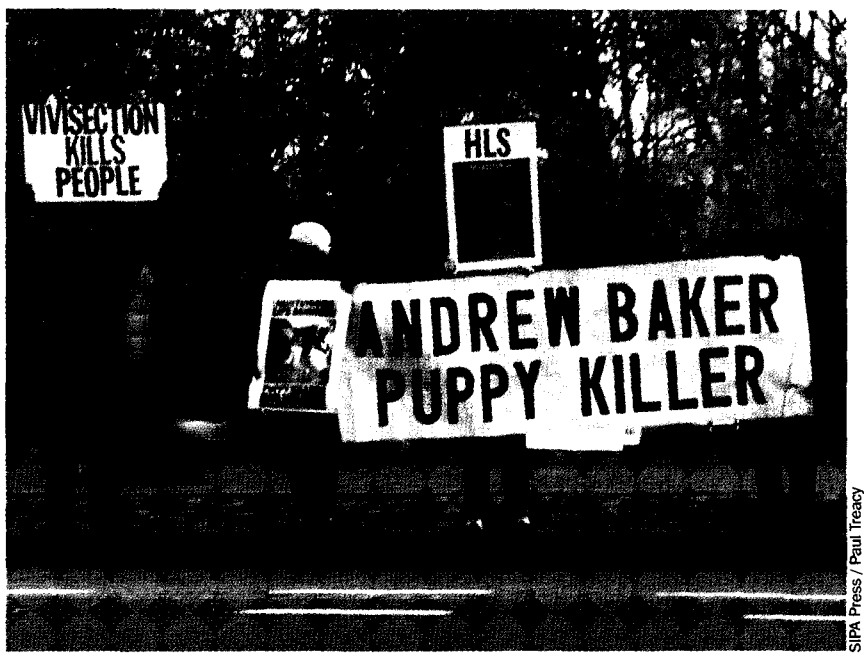
## Animal liberationists intimidate the New York Stock Exchange. BY WESLEY J. SMITH

THE FURY of radical animal liberationists is growing, leading them to acts of brazen lawlessness and flagrant vigilantism. In the United Kingdom, a farm family that raised guinea pigs for medical testing was subjected to years of personal threats and property vandalism by animal liberationists. The family had courageously refused to be intimidated, but when the liberationists robbed the grave of a beloved relative and refused to give the body back, they had finally had enough. Seeing no relief in sight, and desperately wanting to be left alone, the family gave in.

It is understandable that a single family would capitulate in the face of such extreme intimidation. One would, however, expect the leaders of powerful institutions, such as the New York Stock Exchange, to stand firm against such brown-shirt tactics. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Big Board actually showed less courage than the British farm family—they capitulated before even being protested. In a shocking act of appeasement, the NYSE reversed its decision to list the medical testing company Huntingdon Life Sciences (renamed Life Sciences Research) after being threatened by animal liberationists.

The NYSE fiasco is merely the latest triumph for a small radical cadre of vegan thugs called Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC), which has vowed to drive Life Sciences Research out of business because it tests drugs on animals. Toward this end, SHAC activists hit upon a vicious and brutally effective tactic known as "tertiary targeting." SHAC harasses and intimidates executives and other employees (and their families) of any company merely doing business with Life Sciences.

The SHAC website identifies targets, providing their home addresses, phone numbers, and the names and ages of their children and even where they attend school. Even after the NYSE put off Life Sciences' listing, for instance, the SHAC website, according to *Forbes*, listed "names, numbers and email addresses of 100 NYSE staff members." Targeted people may receive anonymous death threats or mailed videotapes of their family members taken by SHAC activists. Companies have been bombed. Homes have been invaded and vandalized. In one recent case, animal rights activists broke into a lawyer's house and flooded it with a garden hose because his company once did business with Life Sciences and wouldn't be cowed into agreeing to never do so again. In a more recent case in the United Kingdom, a nursery school rescinded vouchers to Life Sciences employees in the face of violent threats.



SIPA Press / Paul Treacy

*Protesters outside the Manhattan home of Huntingdon Life Sciences' CEO*

SHAC and their allies have intimidated scores of businesses, including the auditing firm Deloitte & Touche, into cutting ties with Life Sciences. In the United Kingdom, so many banks have been intimidated from doing business with Life Sciences that the company has had to turn to the Bank of England for a commercial account. And now, the New York Stock Exchange has added to the company's misery and the liberationists' power by allowing these extremists to dictate its business decisions.

The stakes in the war against Life Sciences are greater than the survival of one company. If SHAC and its co-conspirators succeed, they will validate terrorism as an effective means of

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accomplishing "animal liberation." And if Life Sciences succumbs, what animal testing enterprise will be safe? And what about other animal-using industries? Today, it is medical testing. Tomorrow it could be the fast food industry, zoos, the salmon fleet. The list is potentially endless. So is the list of potential imitators. Why wouldn't antiwar radicals, having noted SHAC's success, apply tertiary targeting against businesses that contract with the Defense Department?

Stopping SHAC and its ilk should be a high priority of law enforcement. Indeed, the FBI has listed animal rights extremist groups on its domestic terrorists list, leading to arrests and prosecutions. Six members of SHAC, including its former president Kevin Kjonaas, will soon be tried on federal charges in New Jersey for violating the Animal Enterprise Protection Act. Kjonaas is accused of trying to destroy Life Sciences in a systematic campaign that involved stalking, destruction of property, harassment, intimidation, threats, incitement, and more.

Current laws may be inadequate to the threat posed by tertiary targeting. The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works is expected to investigate the question in hearings later this month. The New York Stock Exchange has been invited to attend. But don't be surprised if their officers fail to show up. Once you begin down Craven Road, it is hard to turn back.

And don't expect "mainstream" animal rights leaders—if that is the proper word—to be of any help. Most have stood mutely by as their movement's fringe has grown increasingly ruthless. PETA has explicitly refused to condemn tertiary targeting and has even compared lawlessness in the name of animal rights to the efforts of the Underground Railroad and the French Resistance. Nor have the rank and file made an audible fuss about terrorism committed in furtherance of their cause. This general silence is beginning to sound an awful lot like cheering—calling into question the peaceable nature of the entire animal-rights movement. ♦

# God and (Wo)Man at Yale

## Feminist hysteria (cont.)

**BY HEATHER MAC DONALD**

IN THE WAKE OF the embarrassing Harriet Miers nomination, it is time to ask: Shouldn't feminists—the source of the mandate for a female Supreme Court justice—be disqualified from *any* influence on public affairs? An exchange in the Yale alumni magazine provides the perfect vehicle for analyzing the lunacy of feminist ideology and its unfitness for the real world.

In May, the magazine ran several articles on religion at Yale, provoked by the university's decision to sever ties between its chapel and the Congregationalist Church (now known as the United Church of Christ). The magazine's cover showed a close-up of four smiling clergymen sharing a laugh against the backdrop of Yale's neo-Gothic arches. The caption read: "So, a minister, a priest, a Buddhist, and a rabbi walk into a university . . . no joke: religion at Yale."

This image was more than two female Yale graduates could bear. "I was ashamed at the cover of last month's alumni magazine," wrote Danielle Elizabeth Tumminio in a letter to the editor. Demonstrating the deconstructive interpretive skills she undoubtedly picked up as an undergraduate, Tumminio went on: "[T]his image sends the message that Yale as an academic and spiritual center has not progressed far from the days when only men could take books out of the library, enroll in classes, and graduate with diplomas that gave them the privilege to lead congregations. . . . [I]t waters down religion at Yale to a patriarchy in which students are asked to conform to the God of the old boys' network."

The Rev. Clare Robert, a divinity school graduate, was equally distraught: "I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the latest issue of your magazine," she wrote. "I believe an apology is in order." To the Rev. Robert, Yale's cover shows the failure of "30-plus years of feminism and feminist theology." She asks incredulously: "Didn't anyone look at that front cover of four clergymen and see how unrepresentative it is of Yale, of the people in the pews, and even the campus ministries these men supposedly represent?" Inevitably, Robert also took offense at the article's title: "Gods and Man at Yale." A more "sensitive" editor, she admonished, would have amended the title to "Gods and (Wo)Man at Yale"—and literary style be damned.

The world learned last January that the neurasthenic streak in today's feminists has become so strong that they collapse at the mere mention of scientific hypotheses that displease them (as befell MIT biologist Nancy Hopkins upon hearing Harvard president Larry Summers aver to possible sex differences in mathematical ability). Now it turns out that the neo-Victorians cannot even tolerate the sight of men together without breaking out into shame and dismay.

Tumminio and Robert's elicitation of the "patriarchy" from the magazine's cover is a heavy burden to place on one light-hearted photo—especially since the photo happens to be true. It depicts Yale's four university chaplains—Protestant, Jewish, Buddhist, and Catholic—who just happen to be men. Contrary to Robert's assertion that the picture is "unrepresentative"

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of Yale, it is perfectly representative of the leaders of Yale's main religious communities and is a wholly unremarkable way of introducing the topic at hand.

The irony is that despite their gripe about the cover, Tumminio and Robert implicitly acknowledge that there is nothing remotely "patriarchal" about Yale. Women have a "prominent role" in spiritually nurturing Yale students, Tumminio notes, and serve in large numbers on the divinity school faculty. "Womanist and feminist theology" features prominently in Yale's "religious traditions," says Robert.

The suggestion that the alumni magazine's editors are insensitive to women is equally delusional. This is the same magazine that enthusiastically follows every latest development in Yale's women's and gender studies program, as well as in its queer studies initiatives. In the issue in which Tumminio's and Robert's letters appear, the renowned-alumnus slot goes to Debbie Stoller, the editor of *Bust* magazine ("For Women With Something to Get Off Their Chests") and author of *Stitch 'n Bitch Nation*, which inspired an international network of women's knitting groups.

But feminism is above all else insanely narcissistic and hermetically sealed off from reality. The truth doesn't matter. The fact that the university chaplains *are* male is irrelevant. Feminists such as Tumminio and Robert insist that they must see the female image everywhere, and if they don't, they find solace in something far more satisfying: perpetual injury and rage. Actual equality and access to every social institution count for nothing; one lousy picture, however accurate, triggers an eruption of grievance.

So what is a poor photo editor to do? He has a pleasant image of Yale's university chaplains for a series about the range of religious experience at the college. His problem: The chaplains are men. He knows that this will cause a furor. But what is the proper ratio of male to female that will prevent a feminist wound? If fifty-fifty is always required, does he keep the four chaplains and add four female associate chaplains? If so, the picture will be impossibly crowded. If, on the other hand, he starts jettisoning a chaplain here and a chaplain there in order to reduce the male population, who goes first? The editor's instinct, of course, will be to throw out the Catholic and the Protestant, since they are most associated with the oppressive Western tradition. But here, the sensitive photo editor breaches another mandate: racial representation. Turns out Yale's Protestant chaplain is black. Note that the racial "inclusiveness" of the magazine's cover photo mattered not one iota to the censors, demonstrating that feminists will kick their "people of color" allies in the chops in an instant in their pursuit of female hegemony.

The easiest solution, obviously, is to get rid of the university chaplains entirely and find an all-female photo. And if this picture runs, the editor will receive not one letter from an incensed male reader complaining that he did not see himself "represented" on the cover. Until the feminists can develop a similar degree of immunity to the terrible traumas that daily life inflicts, they should nurse their fragile egos at home and not even think of engagement in anything as bruising as Supreme Court politics. ♦

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# The Culture of Celebrity

*Let us now praise famous airheads*

## By Joseph Epstein

Celebrity at this moment in America is epidemic, and it's spreading fast, sometimes seeming as if nearly everyone has got it. Television provides celebrity dance contests, celebrities take part in reality shows, perfumes carry the names not merely of designers but of actors and singers. Without celebrities, whole sections of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* would have to close down. So pervasive has celebrity become in contemporary American life that one now begins to hear a good deal about a phenomenon known as the Culture of Celebrity.

The word "culture" no longer, I suspect, stands in most people's minds for that whole congeries of institutions, relations, kinship patterns, linguistic forms, and the rest for which the early anthropologists meant it to stand. Words, unlike disciplined soldiers, refuse to remain in place and take orders. They insist on being unruly, and slither and slide around, picking up all sorts of slippery and even goofy meanings. An icon, as we shall see, doesn't stay a small picture of a religious personage but usually turns out nowadays to be someone with spectacular grosses. "The language," as Flaubert once protested in his attempt to tell his mistress Louise Colet how much he loved her, "is inept."

Today, when people glibly refer to "the corporate culture," "the culture of poverty," "the culture of journalism," "the culture of the intelligence community"—and "community" has, of course, itself become another of those hopelessly baggy-pants words, so that one hears talk even of "the homeless community"—what I think is meant by "culture" is the general emotional atmosphere and institutional character surrounding the word to which "culture" is attached. Thus, corporate culture is thought to breed selfishness practiced at the Machiavellian level; the culture of poverty, hopelessness and despair; the culture of journalism, a taste for the sensational combined with a short attention span; the culture of the intelligence community, covering-one's-own-behind viperishness; and so on. Culture used in this way is also brought in to explain unpleasant or at least dreary behavior. "The culture of NASA has to be changed," is a sample of its current usage. The comedian Flip Wilson, after saying something outrageous, would revert to the refrain line, "The debbil made me do it." So, today, when admitting to unethical or otherwise wretched behavior, people often say, "The culture made me do it."

As for "celebrity," the standard definition is no longer the dictionary one but rather closer to the one that Daniel Boorstin gave in his book *The Image: Or What Happened to the American Dream*: "The celebrity," Boorstin wrote, "is a person who is well-known for his well-knownness," which is improved in its frequently misquoted form as "a celebrity is someone famous for being famous." The other standard quotation on this subject is Andy Warhol's "In the future everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes," which also frequently turns up in an improved misquotation as "everyone will have his fifteen minutes of fame."

But to say that a celebrity is someone well-known for being well-known, though clever enough, doesn't quite cover it. Not that there is a shortage of such people who seem to be known only for their well-knownness. What do a couple named Sid and Mercedes Bass do, except appear in bold-face in the *New York Times* "Sunday Styles" section and other such venues (as we now call them) of equally shimmering insignificance, often standing next to Ahmet and Mica Ertegun, also well-known for being well-known? Many moons ago, journalists used to refer to royalty as "face cards"; today celebrities are perhaps best thought of as bold faces, for as such do their

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names often appear in the press (and in a *New York Times* column with that very name, *Bold Face*).

The distinction between celebrity and fame is one most dictionaries tend to fudge. I suspect everyone has, or prefers to make, his own. The one I like derives not from Aristotle, who didn't have to trouble with celebrities, but from the career of Ted Williams. A sportswriter once said that he, Williams, wished to be famous but had no interest in being a celebrity. What Ted Williams wanted to be famous for was his hitting. He wanted everyone who cared about baseball to know that he was—as he believed and may well have been—the greatest pure hitter who ever lived. What he didn't want to do was to take on any of the effort off the baseball field involved in making this known. As an active player, Williams gave no interviews, signed no baseballs or photographs, chose not to be obliging in any way to journalists or fans. A rebarbative character, not to mention often a slightly menacing s.o.b., Williams, if you had asked him, would have said that it was enough that he was the last man to hit .400; he did it on the field, and therefore didn't have to sell himself off the field. As for his duty to his fans, he didn't see that he had any.

Whether Ted Williams was right or wrong to feel as he did is of less interest than the distinction his example provides, which suggests that fame is something one earns—through talent or achievement of one kind or another—while celebrity is something one cultivates or, possibly, has thrust upon one. The two are not, of course, entirely exclusive. One can be immensely talented and full of achievement and yet wish to broadcast one's fame further through the careful cultivation of celebrity; and one can have the thinnest of achievements and be talentless and yet be made to seem otherwise through the mechanics and dynamics of celebrity-creation, in our day a whole mini- (or maybe not so mini) industry of its own.

Or, another possibility, one can become a celebrity with scarcely any pretense to talent or achievement whatsoever. Much modern celebrity seems the result of careful promotion or great good luck or something besides talent and achievement: Mr. Donald Trump, Ms. Paris Hilton, Mr. Regis Philbin, take a bow. The ultimate celebrity of our time may have been John F. Kennedy Jr., notable only for being his parents' very handsome son—both his birth and good looks factors beyond his control—and, alas, known for nothing else whatsoever now, except for the sad, dying-young-Adonis end to his life.

Fame, then, at least as I prefer to think of it, is based on true achievement; celebrity on the broadcasting of that achievement, or the inventing of something that, if not scrutinized too closely, might pass for achievement. Celebrity suggests ephemerality, while fame has a chance of lasting, a shot at reaching the happy shores of posterity.

Oliver Goldsmith, in his poem "The Deserted Village," refers to "good fame," which implies that there is also a bad or false fame. Bad fame is sometimes thought to be fame in the present, or fame on earth, while good fame is that bestowed by posterity—those happy shores again. (Which doesn't eliminate the desire of most of us, at least nowadays, to have our fame here and hereafter, too.) Not false but wretched fame is covered by the word "infamy"—"Infamy, infamy, infamy," remarked the English wit Frank Muir, "they all have it in for me"—while the lower, or pejorative, order of celebrity is covered by the word "notoriety," also frequently misused to mean noteworthiness.

Leo Braudy's magnificent book on the history of fame, *The Frenzy of Renown*, illustrates how the means of broadcasting fame have changed over the centuries: from having one's head engraved on coins, to purchasing statuary of oneself, to (for the really high rollers—Alexander the Great, the Caesar boys) naming cities or even months after oneself, to commissioning painted portraits, to writing books or having books written about one, and so on into our day of the publicity or press agent, the media blitz, the public relations expert, and the egomaniacal blogger. One of the most successful of public-relations experts, Ben Sonnenberg Sr., used to say that he saw it as his job to construct very high pedestals for very small men.

Which leads one to a very proper suspicion of celebrity. As George Orwell said about saints, so it seems only sensible to say about celebrities: They should all be judged guilty until proven innocent. Guilty of what, precisely? I'd say of the fraudulence (however minor) of inflating their brilliance, accomplishments, worth, of passing themselves off as something they aren't, or at least are not quite. If fraudulence is the crime, publicity is the means by which the caper is brought off.

Is the current heightened interest in the celebrated sufficient to form a culture—a culture of a kind worthy of study? The anthropologist Alfred Kroeber defined culture, in part, as embodying "values which may be formulated (overtly as mores) or felt (implicitly as in folkways) by the society carrying the culture, and which it is part of the business of the anthropologist to characterize and define." What are the values of celebrity culture? They are the values, almost exclusively, of publicity. Did they spell one's name right? What was the size and composition of the audience? Did you check the receipts? Was the timing right? Publicity is concerned solely with effects and does not investigate causes or intrinsic value too closely. For example, a few years ago a book of mine called *Snobbery:*



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*The American Version* received what I thought was a too greatly mixed review in the *New York Times Book Review*. I remarked on my disappointment to the publicity man at my publisher's, who promptly told me not to worry: It was a full-page review, on page 11, right-hand side. That, he said, "is very good real estate," which was quite as important as, perhaps more important than, the reviewer's actual words and final judgment. Better to be tepidly considered on page 11 than extravagantly praised on page 27, left-hand side. Real estate, man, it's the name of the game.

We must have new names, Marcel Proust presciently noted—in fashion, in medicine, in art, there must always be new names. It's a very smart remark, and the fields Proust chose seem smart, too, at least for his time. (Now there must also be new names, at a minimum, among movie stars and athletes and politicians.) Implicit in Proust's remark is the notion that if the names don't really exist, if the quality isn't there to sustain them, it doesn't matter; new names we shall have in any case. And every sophisticated society somehow, more or less implicitly, contrives to supply them.

I happen to think that we haven't had a major poet writing in English since perhaps the death of W.H. Auden or, to lower the bar a little, Philip Larkin. But new names are put forth nevertheless—high among them in recent years has been that of Seamus Heaney—because, after all, what kind of a time could we be living in if we didn't have a major poet? And besides there are all those prizes that, year after year, must be given out, even if so many of the recipients don't seem quite worthy of them.

Considered as a culture, celebrity does have its institutions. We now have an elaborate celebrity-creating machinery well in place—all those short-attention-span television shows (*Entertainment Tonight*, *Access Hollywood*, *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*); all those magazines (beginning with *People* and far from ending with the *National Enquirer*). We have high-priced celebrity-mongers—Barbara Walters, Diane Sawyer, Jay Leno, David Letterman, Oprah—who not only live off others' celebrity but also, through their publicity-making power, confer it and have in time become very considerable celebrities each in his or her own right.

Without the taste for celebrity, they would have to close down the whole Style section of every newspaper in the country. Then there is the celebrity profile (in *Vanity Fair*, *Esquire*, *Gentlemen's Quarterly*; these are nowadays usually orchestrated by a press agent, with all touchy questions declared out-of-bounds), or the television talk-show interview with a star, which is beyond parody. Well, *almost* beyond: Martin Short in his parody of a talk-show host remarked to the actor Kiefer Sutherland, "You're Canadian, aren't you? What's that all about?"

Yet we still seem never to have enough celebrities, so we drag in so-called "It Girls" (Paris Hilton, Cindy Crawford, other supermodels), tired television hacks (Regis Philbin, Ed McMahon), back-achingly boring but somehow sacrosanct news anchors (Walter Cronkite, Tom Brokaw). Toss in what I think of as the lower-class punditi, who await calls from various television news and chat shows to demonstrate their locked-in political views and meager expertise on major and cable stations alike: Pat Buchanan, Eleanor Clift, Mark Shields, Robert Novak, Michael Beschloss, and the rest. Ah, if only Lenny Bruce were alive today, he could do a scorchingly cruel bit about Dr. Joyce Brothers sitting by the phone wondering why Jerry Springer never calls.

Many of our current-day celebrities float upon "hype," which is really a publicist's gas used to pump up and set aloft something that doesn't really quite exist. Hype has also given us a new breakdown, or hierarchical categorization, of celebrities. Until twenty-five or so years ago great celebrities were called "stars," a term first used in the movies and entertainment and then taken up by sports, politics, and other fields. Stars proving a bit drab, "super-stars" were called in to play, this term beginning in sports but fairly quickly branching outward. Apparently too many superstars were about, so the trope was switched from astronomy to religion, and we now have "icons." All this takes Proust's original observation a step further: the need for new names to call the new names.

This new ranking—stars, superstars, icons—helps us believe that we live in interesting times. One of the things celebrities do for us is suggest that in their lives they are fulfilling our fantasies. Modern celebrities, along with their fame, tend to be wealthy or, if not themselves beautiful, able to acquire beautiful lovers. Their celebrity makes them, in the view of many, worthy of worship. "So long as man remains free," Dostoyevsky writes in the Grand Inquisitor section of *The Brothers Karamazov*, "he strives for nothing so incessantly and painfully as to find someone to worship." If contemporary celebrities are the best thing on offer as living gods for us to worship, this is not good news.

But the worshipping of celebrities by the public tends to be thin, and not uncommonly it is nicely mixed with loathing. We also, after all, at least partially, like to see our celebrities as frail, ready at all times to crash and burn. Cary Grant once warned the then-young director Peter Bogdanovich, who was at the time living with Cybill Sheppard, to stop telling people he was in love. "And above all," Grant warned, "stop telling them you're



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happy." When Bogdanovich asked why, Cary Grant answered, "Because they're not in love and they're not happy. . . . Just remember, Peter, people do not like beautiful people."

Grant's assertion is borne out by our grocery press, the *National Enquirer*, the *Star*, the *Globe*, and other variants of the English gutter press. All these tabloids could as easily travel under the generic title of the *National Schadenfreude*, for more than half the stories they contain come under the category of "See How the Mighty Have Fallen": Oh, my, I see where that bright young television sitcom star, on a drug binge again, had to be taken to a hospital in an ambulance! To think that the handsome movie star has been cheating on his wife all these years—snakes loose in the Garden of Eden, evidently! Did you note that the powerful senator's drinking has caused him to embarrass himself yet again in public? I see where that immensely successful Hollywood couple turn out to have had a child who died of anorexia! Who'd've thought?

How pleasing to learn that our own simpler, less moneyed, unglamorous lives are, in the end, much to be preferred to those of these beautiful, rich, and powerful people, whose vast publicity has diverted us for so long and whose fall proves even more diverting now. "As would become a lifelong habit for most of us," Thomas McGuane writes in a recent short story in the *New Yorker* called "Ice," "we longed to witness spectacular achievement and mortifying failure. Neither of these things, we were discreetly certain, would ever come to us; we would instead be granted the frictionless lives of the meek."

Along with trying to avoid falling victim to schadenfreude, celebrities, if they are clever, do well to regulate the amount of publicity they allow to cluster around them. And not celebrities alone. Edith Wharton, having published too many stories and essays in a great single rush in various magazines during a concentrated period, feared, as she put it, the danger of becoming "a magazine bore." Celebrities, in the same way, are in danger of becoming publicity bores, though few among them seem to sense it. Because of improperly rationed publicity, along with a substantial helping of self-importance, the comedian Bill Cosby will never again be funny. The actress Elizabeth McGovern said of Sean Penn that he "is brilliant, *brilliant* at being the kind of reluctant celebrity." At the level of high culture, Saul Bellow used to work this bit quite well on the literary front, making every interview (and there have been hundreds of them) feel as if given only with the greatest reluctance, if not under actual duress. Others are brilliant at regulating their publicity. Johnny Carson was very intelligent about carefully husbanding his celebrity, choosing not to come out of retirement, except at exactly the right time or when the perfect occasion presented itself. Apparently it never did. Given the universally generous obituary tributes he received, dying now looks, for him, to have been an excellent career move.

Careful readers will have noticed that I referred above to "the actress Elizabeth McGovern" and felt no need to write anything before or after the name Sean Penn. True celebrities need nothing said of them in apposition, fore or aft. The greatest celebrities are those who don't even require their full names mentioned: Marilyn, Johnny, Liz, Liza, Oprah, Michael (could be Jordan or Jackson—context usually clears this up fairly quickly), Kobe, Martha (Stewart, not Washington), Britney, Shaq, J-Lo, Frank (Sinatra, not Perdue), O.J., and, with the quickest recognition and shortest name of all—trumpets here, please—W.

One has the impression that being a celebrity was easier at any earlier time than it is now, when celebrity-creating institutions, from paparazzi to gutter-press exposés to television talk-shows, weren't as intense, as full-court press, as they are today. In the *Times Literary Supplement*, a reviewer of a biography of Margot Fonteyn noted that Miss Fonteyn "was a star from a more respectful age of celebrity, when keeping one's distance was still possible." My own candidate for the perfect celebrity in the twentieth century would be Noël Coward, a man in whom talent combined with elegance to give off the glow of glamour—and also a man who would have known how to fend off anyone wishing to investigate his private life. Today, instead of elegant celebrities, we have celebrity criminal trials: Michael Jackson, Kobe Bryant, Martha Stewart, Robert Blake, Winona Ryder, and O.J. Simpson. Schadenfreude is in the saddle again.

American society in the twenty-first century, received opinion has it, values only two things: money and celebrity. Whether or not this is true, vast quantities of money, we know, will buy celebrity. The very rich—John D. Rockefeller and powerful people of his era—used to pay press agents to keep their names out of the papers. But today one of the things money buys is a place at the table beside the celebrated, with the celebrities generally delighted to accommodate, there to share some of the glaring light. An example is Mort Zuckerman, who made an early fortune in real estate, has bought magazines and newspapers, and is now himself among the punditi, offering his largely unexceptional political views on the *McLaughlin Group* and other television chat shows. Which is merely another way of saying that, whether or not celebrity in and of itself constitutes a culture, it has certainly penetrated and permeated much of American culture generally.

Such has been the reach of celebrity culture in our



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time that it has long ago entered into academic life. The celebrity professor has been on the scene for more than three decades. As long ago as 1962, in fact, I recall hearing that Oscar Cargill, in those days a name of some note in the English Department of NYU, had tried to lure the then-young Robert Brustein, a professor of theater and the drama critic for the *New Republic*, away from Columbia. Cargill had said to Brustein, "I'm not going to bulls—t you, Bob, we're looking for a star, and you're it." Brustein apparently wasn't looking to be placed in a new constellation, and remained at Columbia, at least for a while longer, before moving on to Yale and thence to Harvard.

The academic star, who is really the academic celebrity, is now a fairly common figure in what the world, that ignorant ninny, reckons the Great American Universities. Richard Rorty is such a star; so is Henry Louis Gates Jr. (who as "Skip" even has some celebrity nickname-recognition); and, at a slightly lower level, there are Marjorie Garber, Eve Sedgwick, Stanley Fish, and perhaps now Stephen Greenblatt. Stanley Fish doesn't even seem to mind that much of his celebrity is owed to his being portrayed in novels by David Lodge as an indefatigable, grubby little operator (though Lodge claims to admire Fish's happy vulgarity). Professors Garber and Sedgwick seem to have acquired their celebrity through the outrageousness of the topics they've chosen to write about.

By measure of pure celebrity, Cornel West is, at the moment, the star of all academic stars, a man called by *Newsweek* "an eloquent prophet with attitude." (A bit difficult, I think, to imagine *Newsweek* or any other publication writing something similar of Lionel Trilling, Walter Jackson Bate, Marjorie Hope Nicolson, or John Hope Franklin.) He records rap CDs and appears at benefits with movie stars and famous athletes. When the president of Harvard spoke critically to West about his work not constituting serious scholarship (as if that had anything to do with anything), it made front-page news in the *New York Times*. When West left Harvard in indignation, he was instantly welcomed by Princeton. If West had been a few kilowatts more the celebrity than he is, he might have been able to arrange for the firing of the president of the university, the way certain superstars in the National Basketball Association—Magic Johnson, Isiah Thomas, Larry Bird, Michael Jordan—were able, if it pleased them, to have their coaches fired.

Genuine scholarship, power of ratiocination glowing brightly in the classroom, is distinctly not what makes an academic celebrity or, if you prefer, superstar. What makes an academic celebrity, for the most part, is exposure, which is ultimately publicity. Exposure can mean appearing in the right extra-academic magazines or journals: the *New York Review of Books*, the *London Review of Books*, the *Atlantic Monthly*; *Harper's* and the *New Republic* possibly qualify, as do occasional cameo performances on the op-ed pages of the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. Having one's face pop up on the right television and radio programs—PBS and NPR certainly, and enough of the right kinds of appearances on C-SPAN—does not hurt. A commercially successful, much-discussed book helps hugely.

So does strong public alignment with the correct political causes. Harvey Mansfield, the political philosopher at Harvard, is a secondary academic celebrity of sorts, but not much in demand, owing to his conservatism; Shelby Steele, a black professor of English who has been critical of various aspects of African-American politics, was always overlooked during the days when universities knocked themselves out to get black professors. Both men have been judged politically incorrect. The underlying and overarching point is, to become an academic celebrity you have to promote yourself outside the academy, but in careful and subtle ways.

One might once have assumed that the culture of celebrity was chiefly about show business and the outer edges of the arts, occasionally touching on the academy (there cannot be more than twenty or so academic superstars). But it has also much altered intellectual life generally. The past ten years or so have seen the advent of the "public intellectual." There are good reasons to feel uncomfortable with that adjective "public," which drains away much of the traditional meaning of intellectual. An intellectual is someone who is excited by and lives off and in ideas. An intellectual has traditionally been a person unaffiliated, which is to say someone unbeholden to anything but the power of his or her ideas. Intellectuals used to be freelance, until fifty or so years ago, when jobs in the universities and in journalism began to open up to some among them.

Far from being devoted to ideas for their own sake, the intellectual equivalent of art for art's sake, the so-called public intellectual of our day is usually someone who comments on what is in the news, in the hope of affecting policy, or events, or opinion in line with his own political position, or orientation. He isn't necessarily an intellectual at all, but merely someone who has read a few books, mastered a style, a jargon, and a maven's authoritative tone, and has a clearly demarcated political line.

But even when the public intellectual isn't purely tied to the news, or isn't thoroughly political, what he or she really is, or ought to be called, is a "publicity intellectual." In Richard A. Posner's interesting book *Public Intellectuals*, intellectuals are in one place ranked by the number of media mentions they or their work have garnered,



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which, if I am correct about publicity being at the heart of the enterprise of the public intellectual, may be crude but is not foolish. Not knowledge, it turns out, but publicity is power.

The most celebrated intellectuals of our day have been those most skillful at gaining publicity for their writing and their pronouncements. Take, as a case very much in point, Susan Sontag. When Susan Sontag died at the end of last year, her obituary was front-page news in the *New York Times*, and on the inside of the paper it ran to a full page with five photographs, most of them carefully posed—a variety, it does not seem unfair to call it, of intellectual cheesecake. Will the current prime ministers of England and France when they peg out receive equal space or pictorial coverage? Unlikely, I think. Why did Ms. Sontag, who was, let it be said, in many ways the pure type of the old intellectual—unattached to any institution, earning her living (apart from MacArthur Foundation and other grants) entirely from her ideas as she put them in writing—why did she attract the attention she did?

I don't believe Susan Sontag's celebrity finally had much to do with the power or cogency of her ideas. Her most noteworthy idea was not so much an idea at all but a description of a style, a kind of reverse or anti-style, that went by the name of Camp and that was gay in its impulse. Might it have been her politics? Yes, politics had a lot to do with it, even though when she expressed herself on political subjects, she frequently got things mightily askew: During the Vietnam war she said that "the white race is the cancer of human history." As late as the 1980s, much too late for anyone in the know, she called communism "fascism with a friendly face" (what do you suppose she found so friendly about it?). To cheer up the besieged people of Sarajevo, she brought them a production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. She announced in the *New Yorker* that the killing of 3,000 innocent people on 9/11 was an act that America had brought on itself. As for the writing that originally brought her celebrity, she later came to apologize for *Against Interpretation*, her most influential single book. I do not know any people who claim to have derived keen pleasure from her fiction. If all this is roughly so, why, then, do you suppose that Susan Sontag was easily the single most celebrated—the greatest celebrity—intellectual of our time?

With the ordinary female professor's face and body, I don't think Ms. Sontag would quite have achieved the same celebrity. Her attractiveness as a young woman had a great deal to do with the extent of her celebrity; and she and her publisher took that (early) physical attractiveness all the way out. From reading Carl Rollyson and Lisa Paddock's biography *Susan Sontag: The Making of an Icon*, one gets a sense of how carefully and relentlessly she was promoted by her publisher, Roger Straus. I do not mean to say that Sontag was unintelligent, or talentless, but Straus, through having her always dramatically photographed, by sending angry letters to the editors of journals where she was ill-reviewed, by bringing out her books with the most careful accompanying orchestration, promoted this often difficult and unrewarding writer into something close to a household name with a face that was ready, so to say, to be Warholed. That Sontag spent her last years with Annie Leibowitz, herself the most successful magazine photographer of our day, seems somehow the most natural thing in the world. Even in the realm of the intellect, celebrities are not born but made, usually very carefully made—as was, indubitably, the celebrity of Susan Sontag.

One of the major themes in Leo Braudy's *The Frenzy of Renown* is the fame and celebrity of artists, and above all writers. To sketch in a few bare strokes the richly complex story Braudy tells, writers went from serving power (in Rome) to serving God (in early Christendom) to serving patrons (in the eighteenth century) to serving themselves, with a careful eye cocked toward both the contemporary public and posterity (under Romanticism), to serving mammon, to a state of interesting confusion, which is where we are today, with celebrity affecting literature in more and more significant ways.

Writers are supposed to be aristocrats of the spirit, not promoters, hustlers, salesmen for their own work. Securing a larger audience for their work was not thought to be their problem. "Fit audience, though few," in John Milton's phrase, was all right, so long as the few were the most artistically alert, or aesthetically fittest. Picture Lord Byron, Count Tolstoy, or Charles Baudelaire at a lectern at Barnes & Noble, C-SPAN camera turned on, flogging (wonderful word!) his own most recent books. Not possible!

Some superior writers have been very careful caretakers of their careers. In a letter to one of his philosophy professors at Harvard, T.S. Eliot wrote that there were two ways to achieve literary celebrity in London: One was to appear often in a variety of publications; the other to appear seldom but always to make certain to dazzle when one did. Eliot, of course, chose the latter, and it worked smashingly. But he was still counting on gaining his reputation through his actual writing. Now good work alone doesn't quite seem to make it; the publicity catapults need to be hauled into place, the walls of indifference stormed. Some writers have decided to steer shy from publicity altogether: Thomas Pynchon for one, J.D. Salinger for another (if he is actually still writing or yet considers himself a writer). But actively seeking publicity was thought for a writer, somehow, vulgar—at least it was until the last few decades.



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Edmund Wilson, the famous American literary critic, used to answer requests with a postcard that read:

> Edmund Wilson regrets that it is impossible for him to: Read manuscripts, Write articles or books to order, Make statements for publicity purposes, Do any kind of editorial work, Judge literary contests, Give interviews, Conduct educational courses, Deliver lectures, Give talks or make speeches, Take part in writers congresses, Answer questionnaires, Contribute or take part in symposiums or "panels" of any kind, Contribute manuscripts for sale, Donate copies of his books to Libraries, Autograph books for strangers, Allow his name to be used on letterheads, Supply personal information about himself, Supply photographs of himself, Supply opinions on literary or other subjects.

A fairly impressive list, I'd say. When I was young, Edmund Wilson supplied for me the model of how a literary man ought to carry himself. One of the things I personally found most impressive about his list is that everything Edmund Wilson clearly states he will not do, Joseph Epstein has now done, and more than once, and, like the young woman in the Häagen-Dazs commercial sitting on her couch with an empty carton of ice cream, is likely to do again and again.

EDMUND WILSON REGRETS THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO:

READ MANUSCRIPTS,
WRITE ARTICLES OR BOOKS TO ORDER,
MAKE STATEMENTS FOR PUBLICITY PURPOSES,
DO ANY KIND OF EDITORIAL WORK,
JUDGE LITERARY CONTESTS,
CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL COURSES,
DELIVER LECTURES,
GIVE TALKS OR MAKE SPEECHES,
BROADCAST OR APPEAR ON TELEVISION,
TAKE PART IN WRITERS' CONGRESSES,
ANSWER QUESTIONNAIRES,
CONTRIBUTE TO OR TAKE PART IN SYMPOSIUMS OR "PANELS" OF ANY KIND,
CONTRIBUTE MANUSCRIPTS FOR SALES,
DONATE COPIES OF HIS BOOKS TO LIBRARIES,
AUTOGRAPH BOOKS FOR STRANGERS,
ALLOW HIS NAME TO BE USED ON LETTERHEADS,
SUPPLY PERSONAL INFORMATION ABOUT HIMSELF,
SUPPLY PHOTOGRAPHS OF HIMSELF,
SUPPLY OPINIONS ON LITERARY OR OTHER SUBJECTS.

Courtesy of the Terzian Collection

I tell myself that I do these various things in the effort to acquire more readers. After all, one of the reasons I write, apart from pleasure in working out the aesthetic problems and moral questions presented by my subjects and in my stories, is to find the best readers. I also want to sell books, to make a few shekels, to please my publisher, to continue to be published in the future in a proper way. Having a high threshold for praise, I also don't in the least mind meeting strangers who tell me that they take some delight in my writing. But, more than all this, I have now come to think that writing away quietly, producing (the hope is) good work, isn't any longer quite sufficient in a culture dominated by the boisterous spirit of celebrity. In an increasingly noisy cultural scene, with many voices and media competing for attention, one feels—perhaps incorrectly but nonetheless insistently—the need to make one's own small stir, however pathetic. So, on occasion, I have gone about tooting my own little paper horn, doing book tours, submitting to the comically pompous self-importance of interviews, and doing so many of the other things that Edmund Wilson didn't think twice about refusing to do.

"You're slightly famous, aren't you, Grandpa?" my then eight-year-old granddaughter once said to me. "I am slightly famous, Annabelle," I replied, "except no one quite knows who I am." This hasn't changed much over the years. But of course seeking celebrity in our culture is a mug's game, one you cannot finally hope to win. The only large, lumpy kind of big-time celebrity available, outside movie celebrity, is to be had through appearing fairly regularly on television. I had the merest inkling of this fame when I was walking along one sunny morning in downtown Baltimore, and a red Mazda convertible screeched to a halt, the driver lowered his window, pointed a long index finger at me, hesitated, and finally, the shock of recognition lighting up his face, yelled, "C-SPAN!"

I was recently asked, through email, to write a short piece for a high price for a volume about the city of Chicago. When I agreed to do it, the editor of the volume, who is (I take it) young, told me how very pleased she was to have someone as distinguished as I among the volume's contributors. But she did have just one request. Before making things final, she wondered if she might see a sample of my writing. More than forty years in the business, I thought, echoing the character played by Zero Mostel in *The Producers*, and I'm still wearing the celebrity equivalent of a cardboard belt.

"Every time I think I'm famous," Virgil Thomson said, "I have only to go out into the world." So it is, and so ought it probably to remain for writers, musicians, and visual artists who prefer to consider themselves serious. The comedian Richard Pryor once said that he would deem himself famous when people recognized him, as they recognized Bob Hope and Muhammad Ali, by his captionless caricature. That is certainly one clear criterion for celebrity. But the best criterion I've yet come across holds that you are celebrated, indeed famous, only when a crazy person imagines he is you. It's especially pleasing that the penetrating and prolific author of this remark happens to go by the name of Anonymous. ♦



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# A Faith-Based Nomination

*In making the case for Harriet Miers, the White House is emphasizing her religious views.*

## By Terry Eastland

It was early on the first Monday in October, two hours before the Supreme Court heard its first case of the new term, that President Bush announced the nomination of Harriet Miers to succeed Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. That evening, James Dobson, the founder and chairman of Focus on the Family, a vast evangelical ministry based in Colorado Springs, came out strongly in favor of the choice. On Fox News, Dobson conceded he hadn't met Miers, but said he could support her nomination because the president had appointed high-quality judges and thus could be trusted to make another good choice. "Beyond that," he said, "I do know things that I am not prepared to talk about here."

That comment, surely not in the White House talking points, led Senate Democrats to wonder whether Miers might have made commitments to her sponsors as to how she would decide certain cases. And so on Tuesday, the second day of her young and already controversial nomination, she found herself having to assure the ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, that she had spoken to no one about how she might vote.

What "things," then, does Dobson know? "There are some things we learned about her Christian commitment," an aide to Dobson told me, speaking not for attribution. And those things very likely are among the ones that within 48 hours of her nomination were being widely reported. The stories relied on sources authorized by the handlers of the Miers nomination, who also spoke to evangelical leaders. Those sources include Texas Supreme Court Justice Nathan Hecht and Miers's pastor, Ron Key, who both are from Dallas, the nominee's hometown. Both are longtime friends and share her Christian faith, which, like the president's, is that of an evangelical Protestant.

Born in Dallas in 1945, Miers graduated from Hillcrest High School, then took her undergraduate degree (in mathematics) and her law degree at Southern Methodist University, not more than a ten-minute drive from Hillcrest. After clerking for a federal district judge, she joined a prestigious Dallas firm, Locke Purnell Boren Laney & Neely, where she soon made partner, specializing in commercial litigation. For Miers, however, career success only went so far, says Hecht, then a junior lawyer at Locke Purnell. "She began thinking about what's important—what do I want to believe and what will give me meaning."

Miers had grown up going to Catholic and Episcopal churches, but her faith had yet to acquire depth, says Hecht, who likely is the person Dobson was referring to last week when he told the *New York Times*, "I know the person who brought her to the Lord." In 1979, during one of evidently many conversations with Hecht about ultimate questions, Miers decided to become a believer—in the well-known evangelical vernacular, to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. "I was with her at the time," says Hecht, and the question came up about where she might go to church. "I said, 'Why don't you come with me to my church?'" She did, and soon she was baptized (full immersion) and became a member of Valley View Christian Church, in North Dallas.

Ron Key became pastor of Valley View in 1972, eight years after its founding. Christian Churches like Valley View are descended from the early nineteenth century Restorationist Movement, so-called because of its intention to restore New Testament teaching about the church. Valley View is part of what Key calls "a loose confederation" of Christian Churches known as the North American Christian Convention. It was formed in 1927, at a time when Protestant churches generally were dividing along theologically progressive and conserva-

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tive lines. The conservatives among the restorationists called themselves "independents," and the North American Christian Convention amounted to a declaration of their independence from the liberal programs and doctrines of the (also restorationist) Disciples of Christ. The convention has not evolved into a denomination (which is why Valley View describes itself as "nondenominational") and remains still simply a fellowship of like-minded churches whose doctrines are within the mainstream of American evangelicalism. As a visitor to *www.vvcc.org* can see, the church believes in the Bible as "the only infallible, inspired, authoritative Word of God" and that "to receive Christ is to believe in Jesus as God's Son and Savior of the world, repent of personal sin, confess Christ publicly and be baptized."

Valley View teaches certain moral views that it believes are grounded in the Bible. Most notably, it is pro-life and opposes same-sex marriage. But Key says that the church doesn't treat those matters in isolation. "The major issue is Jesus Christ," he says, and "the need to lift him up" and for people to "walk with Christ" in their own personal lives. It would be hard to imagine many attending Valley View for two decades as Miers did who hold different views on such questions. Several friends of Miers told me, on background, that she is pro-life and defines marriage in traditional terms.

By the accounts of Hecht and Key, Miers was a quite active member of Valley View. "She went every single Sunday" before moving to Washington to work in the White House, says Hecht, adding that when the church had Sunday night and Wednesday night services, she attended those as well. At one point she taught a Sunday night class for first, second, and third graders. She also served on the missions committee in a church to which missions—with an annual budget of $500,000—are very important. Miers participated in decisions that helped fund Bible translators, orphanages, colleges, and seminaries. Key says the committee met weekly. "With so many missions, it was very time-consuming for her," he told me. She also served as the church's legal counsel.

At the moment, Valley View is experiencing a painful division over matters of governance and worship, and a group has left to form a new church, yet to be named. Hecht, a former elder at Valley View, is part of that group, and Key, whom the church's elders recently discharged, has been preaching at services held for now in a North Dallas hotel. Hecht says Miers is part of the new church, which has the same doctrines as Valley View. "We believe just like they do," says Key.

That Bush has picked for the Court an evangelical Protestant isn't surprising. This is not to say he chose her for that reason, and Bush aides deny that he did. Bush has a record of giving new tasks to people he has long known and trusts. Miers falls into that small category (others include Alberto Gonzales and Karen Hughes), and she isn't there on account of any religious test. Still, Supreme Court justices do come from somewhere, religiously speaking. And given that evangelicals make up a growing share of the population, and given, too, that evangelicals in far greater numbers identify with the GOP than the Democratic party, you'd expect that at some point a Republican president would tap for the Court a lawyer who happened to be an evangelical. Of course, in Bush, we're not talking about any

Illustration by Earl Kelleny



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Republican president but one for whom the evangelical designation is apt, his life turning around after a mid-life "recommitment" to Christ, who, as he put it during his first run for the presidency, "changed my heart." Suffice it to say, Bush hardly finds evangelical faith a disqualification for office.

Nor is it surprising that Miers is an evangelical Protestant from Dallas. Three years ago *Christianity Today* claimed, in a cover story, that Dallas had become "The New Capital of Evangelicalism." Anyone who's lived there (and I grew up in Dallas) will find it hard to argue with that. The magazine reported that Dallas "has more megachurches, megaseminaries, and mega-Christian [meaning evangelical] activity than any other American city." Valley View, with 1,000 members, is big as evangelical churches in Dallas go, but it is hardly a megachurch. And the creation of a new church out of Valley View is a common phenomenon in a city that has experienced enormous church growth—especially of the evangelical variety—over the past half century.

Since coming to Washington, Miers has stayed in close touch with her Dallas friends and constantly asks for their prayers, says Key. She apparently has not found a church in the North American Christian Convention to attend. As is common among evangelicals, she has gone to several churches. Key says she most often goes to St. John's Episcopal, which is across from the White House. Hecht says she also has attended National Cathedral and National Presbyterian. The first two churches are by no means evangelical in theology, but evangelicals sometimes show up for their services. For example, Bush often goes to St. John's. One might think Miers goes there merely because of her commitment and loyalty to Bush. Key says the reason she attends is that St. John's, like Valley View, offers communion every Sunday, and "she believes it is important to have communion" that often.

In that Fox News interview, Dobson said, "There has not been an appointee to the Supreme Court who is an evangelical Christian to my knowledge in decades," and "it is refreshing that one could even be considered." If confirmed, Miers would be the Court's only evangelical Protestant, and arguably she would be the first since the advent of modern evangelicalism almost a century ago. (Clarence Thomas is the only competitor for the latter designation. When he went on the Court, he was a member of a charismatic Episcopal church that describes itself as evangelical. A few years later he went back to the Catholic church of his formative years.) Dobson isn't the only evangelical leader to see Miers in historical terms. Jay Sekulow, counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, said last week in an interview with Pat Robertson that the Miers nomination represented "a big opportunity for those of us who . . . share an evangelical faith in Christianity to see someone with our positions put on the court."

The administration has encouraged the transmission of messages like these to evangelical leaders. Indeed, an exercise in religious identity politics can be glimpsed. But a question this early in the confirmation process is whether it will work—in particular, whether the evangelicals who are key constituents in the Republican coalition will come alive with excitement about a nominee whom some conservatives openly criticize and key Republican senators, such as Sam Brownback and John Thune, himself an evangelical, have yet to endorse.

*It is entirely possible for someone to hold moral (or religious) views that are deemed conservative, yet to approach judging in ways that are at odds with the judicial conservatism that the president himself says he wants in a jurist.*

The problem for Bush a week after announcing his choice of Miers stems from the fact that it is entirely possible for someone to hold moral (or religious, for that matter) views that are deemed conservative, yet to approach judging in ways that are at odds with the judicial conservatism that the president himself says he wants in a jurist. That is why what people most need to know about Miers is how she thinks about the law and the role of the courts—a question not easy to answer given the nature of her legal career and the brevity of her encounters with federal constitutional law. The president is asking conservatives—including the evangelicals among them—to trust him as to Miers's fitness in all respects for the High Court.

Not every evangelical leader has decided so to trust—Gary Bauer and Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council have expressed doubts about the nomination. And there is off-the-record anxiety. "People are mystified," one prominent evangelical told me, "that [the president] wouldn't go to the max" and nominate a clear exemplar of his judicial philosophy. "A lot of people are nervous." Dobson himself reflected that nervousness last Wednesday, the third day after the announcement of Miers's nomination, when he used his own talk show to confess to an "agonized heart" and to pray about whether he had made the right decision with his early endorsement. ♦



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# The Injustice Department

*Lawrence Greenfeld was an outstanding leader of the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Why, then, was he fired?*

**By Joseph M. Bessette**

In August the Bush administration fired its director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics in a dispute over a press release about a report on racial profiling. Newspaper editorialists and Democrats in Congress charged the administration with suppressing painful truths. In response, Republican officials apparently spread the word to sympathetic commentators that this was a battle between the administration and the anti-Bush permanent bureaucracy. As one commentator told National Public Radio, "Bush finally clamped down on this guy."

"This guy" was President Bush's own appointee to the directorship of BJS, Lawrence A. Greenfeld, a career criminal justice statistician and longtime deputy director of the agency, a unit of the Department of Justice. Happy as the principal deputy, Greenfeld had not sought the top job, which had always gone to a political appointee serving at the pleasure of the president. Yet, when the directorship opened up after Bush's election in 2000, Greenfeld's stellar reputation within the criminal justice community brought him to the attention of the White House. President Bush nominated him to serve as director, and he was confirmed by the Senate. At his swearing-in ceremony, former Attorney General Edwin Meese praised the accomplishments of Greenfeld and the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

So what are we to make of this incident? Has the administration won a battle against a hostile bureaucracy, or has it suppressed the truth about racial profiling in the United States? A review of the facts compels four conclusions. First, the administration did not try to suppress or manipulate data, though it did seek to deny publicity to uncomfortable facts. Second, its ham-handedness backfired by attracting infinitely more attention to the sensitive racial profiling data than would otherwise have been the case. Third, it cashiered Greenfeld for doing his job in a responsible and, indeed, exemplary way. Finally, not content simply with firing a dedicated public servant, it maligned him and his agency in a way that was deeply unjust, that undermined morale at a model federal agency, and that jeopardized its good work and its reputation within the criminal justice community.

*The administration has cashiered a dedicated public servant and undermined morale at a model federal agency.*

A personal note: I had the pleasure and honor of working at BJS from 1985 to 1990. For the first three and a half years I served as the deputy director for data analysis to Steven R. Schlesinger, who had been appointed by President Reagan to be the first director of the new agency. In June 1988 I began a two-year stint as acting director of BJS, after which I returned to the academy. As a political appointee, I served under, and at the pleasure of, Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush and Attorneys General William French Smith, Edwin Meese, and Richard Thornburgh. When I first went to BJS, Greenfeld was in charge of corrections data; when I was acting director, he served as deputy director. In both capacities I worked with him virtually every day. As I told the *New York Times* when asked to comment on Greenfeld's firing, "I've never met a finer public servant."

*Times* reporter Eric Lichtblau broke the story of Greenfeld's firing in a front-page piece on August 24. According to Lichtblau—whose account, to the best of my

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knowledge, has not been disputed by any of the parties involved—Greenfeld and acting Assistant Attorney General Tracy A. Henke had clashed over the contents of a press release to announce the publication of a major BJS study on traffic stops by police. While the study (which was mandated by Congress) showed that white, black, and Hispanic drivers were stopped at almost identical rates in 2002 (8.7 percent of whites, 9.1 percent of blacks, and 8.6 percent of Hispanics), once stopped, black and Hispanic drivers were two to three times more likely to suffer a negative consequence, such as being searched, handcuffed, or arrested. Henke had insisted that the information on the racial/ethnic disparities be removed from the draft press release, writing "Do we need this?" and "Make the changes" on the copy. Greenfeld refused and the press release was withdrawn. The study itself, however, was released unchanged and can be viewed in its entirety on the BJS website (*Contacts between Police and the Public: Findings from the 2002 National Survey*, April 2005, at *www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cpp02.pdf*). Shortly thereafter, Greenfeld was brought in for questioning by the third highest ranking official in the Justice Department and then called to the White House and asked to resign.

The *New York Times* story attracted widespread attention. Democrats in Congress jumped on the opportunity to criticize the administration for suppressing data, and several called for an investigation by Congress's Government Accountability Office or the Department of Justice's inspector general. The *Times* itself carried several follow-up news stories; Maureen Dowd and Frank Rich mentioned the incident in their respective columns; and numerous major newspapers took the administration to task in their editorials.

It didn't take long for the administration to defend itself by attacking its own appointee and his agency. Just three days after the original *Times* story ran, a well-known conservative commentator told NPR that "the story from the people that I've talked to is that this has much more to do with a war with the permanent bureaucracy in Washington. The permanent bureaucracy in Washington, not just the Bureau of Justice Statistics but elsewhere, does not like the Bush administration very much. And for months now or years now, BJS . . . [has] been leaking to the mainstream media to embarrass Bush. This has been happening a lot, and so Bush finally clamped down on this guy." A convenient line, especially since Henke will soon appear before a Senate committee considering her nomination to a high-level position in the Department of Homeland Security, but the story is false.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is one of the great success stories of the American bureaucracy. Created out of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the 1970s, it employs about 50 people, most of whom are experts in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating statistical data on crime and justice. When I was there, a dozen of the employees, fully a third of the professional staff, held Ph.D.s. In some ways it felt more like an academic department than a government agency. The staff were, and are, extraordinarily dedicated to the agency's mission and extraordinarily successful at accomplishing it. While the agency is expected to collect, analyze, and disseminate data on criminal justice issues of importance to whatever administration is in power, it also enjoys a kind of quasi-independent status, as reflected in the fact that it has always been located in a building separate from "main Justice" and that its director is the appointee not of the attorney general but of the president himself, requiring Senate confirmation.

*It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of BJS data, especially in documenting the leniency of the American criminal justice system.*

To say that BJS is highly regarded in the criminal justice community is an understatement. With its small staff, it publishes upwards of 50 statistical reports each year, including several thousand spreadsheets with data on every aspect of the criminal justice system: e.g., criminal victimizations, conviction and sentencing data, prisoner and jail counts, death row, recidivism, and justice expenditures. At a time when many academics are criticized for keeping tight control over their data sets, BJS makes available to the public the underlying data for all its studies, allowing researchers to replicate its findings. The BJS website, which the public accesses as many as 20,000 times each day, is a treasure trove of data on virtually every conceivable aspect of crime and justice. Despite the staggering quantity of data that BJS produces, its record of accuracy is unparalleled.

It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of BJS data, especially in documenting the leniency of the American criminal justice system and thus pointing the way to crime reduction through tougher punishment (although the agency itself steers clear of editorializing



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and policy recommendations). It was BJS studies that showed that a third of those convicted of felonies in state courts receive no jail time at sentencing; that nearly everyone in state prisons (93 percent) is a convicted violent offender or convicted recidivist (not the first-time nonviolent offender we hear so much about); that even those convicted of the most serious violent crimes serve what many consider unconscionably short prison terms (e.g., about five years for rape); and that two-thirds of those released from state prisons are arrested for a new crime within three years. For example, when BJS studied 270,000 offenders released from 15 state prisons in 1994, it found that these individuals had been arrested for 4.1 million crimes before their most recent imprisonment and another 744,000 crimes within three years of release. And because only a small fraction of crimes ever result in an arrest, we can reasonably conclude that this one group of offenders likely committed 10 million or more crimes through 1997. This is strong evidence indeed that tougher sentencing of recidivists will bear fruit in lower crime rates.

In recent years, BJS has expanded its data collection efforts in innovative ways to shed light on issues of growing importance. For example, its 1998 and 2001 surveys documenting huge backlogs in DNA labs throughout the nation led to a major Bush administration effort to address the problem.

No one is more responsible for BJS's record of achievement than Larry Greenfeld. He created from scratch many of the key data sets, and carefully oversaw others over the years as the agency's deputy director and director. He and his staff pioneered innovative studies on dozens of criminal justice issues and have successfully steered the agency into the Internet age, providing the public and the criminal justice community with a website that is a model of clarity, ease of use, and richness of data. It is hard to imagine what more a federal agency and its director could do to faithfully serve the public trust. And Greenfeld and his staff have done all this while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism.

Part of that professionalism is refusing to agree to a press release that would be deceptively incomplete. BJS's study on traffic stops contained some very good news: White, black, and Hispanic drivers were stopped by the police at virtually identical rates. This is compelling evidence against the stereotype of police racial profiling. True, this encouraging finding was tempered by the fact that once stopped, blacks and Hispanics were much more likely to be searched, handcuffed, or arrested (although the vast majority of all three groups suffered nothing more than the issuance of a warning or traffic ticket). Yet this finding itself does not prove racism in police treatment: There may have been legitimate nonracial reasons the individuals were treated as they were. Indeed, if police disproportionately enforce traffic laws based on race and ethnicity, it is hard to understand why they don't pull over higher proportions of blacks and Hispanics. Serious people ought to care about and reflect upon data of this sort; and they ought not to be afraid to let the public know about it.

Ironically, virtually identical data were contained in the previous BJS study on police contacts and were properly identified in the corresponding press release. In March 2001, BJS released a comparable study of police contacts in 1999. On the second page of the two-page press release (still available on the BJS website), it was duly noted that "Black and Hispanic motorists (11 percent each) were more likely than whites (5 percent) to be physically searched or have their vehicles searched." The information entered the public domain with nary a ripple of controversy.

As Greenfeld told the *New York Times* in defending the administration that had done him wrong, "There's always a natural and healthy tension between the people who make the policy and the people who do the statistics. That's there every day of the week, because some days you're going to have good news and some days you're going to have bad news." Despite the tension, it is important for political appointees to understand and respect the mission of government statistics agencies. "Quasi-independence" perhaps best captures the relationship.

When I was at BJS, there was a plan afoot to consolidate all the executive branch statistics agencies into one large independent agency, along the lines of "Statistics Canada." I argued to the attorney general that this would be bad for the Department of Justice by placing too great a distance between the line agency and its statistical arm. But if statistics agencies should not be too distant from the operating agencies, neither should they be too close. In the current episode, main Justice overreached, generating an unnecessary public relations flap that ill-served the president. In the process, it wounded and weakened an outstanding public agency—one critical in the long run to the nation's battle against crime—and it mistreated a fine public servant. What seems to be lacking in those responsible for these events is an appreciation of the importance of publicly credible data for sound policymaking, an understanding of the political nuances of bridging the gap between policy and data, and, frankly, some simple human decency. ♦



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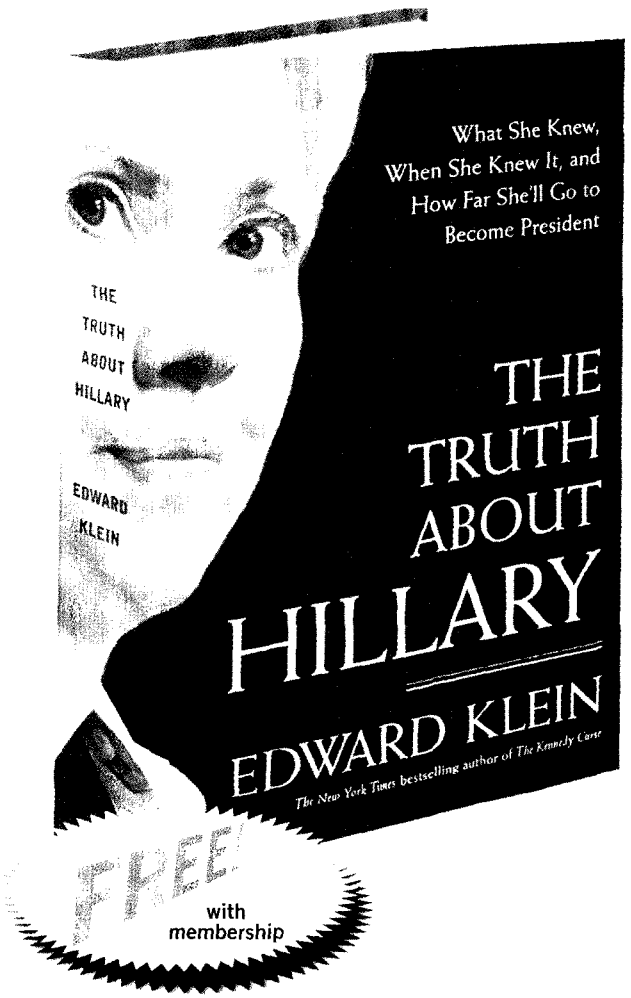


Everyone knows that Bill Clinton wanted to be President of the United States ever since he was a boy. What almost no one knows is that his wife Hillary harbored the same ambition since she was a girl—and that her plan from the very start of their marriage was to succeed him in the Oval Office. Now, as Hillary gears up to run for President in 2008, distinguished journalist Edward Klein has produced an exposé of her darkest secrets that just might do to her presidential ambitions what the Swift Boat Veterans' *Unfit for Command* did to John Kerry's.

Drawing on rare access to sources close to Hillary Clinton, Klein—former editor in chief of *The New York Times Magazine*—reveals a pattern of chronic bad behavior during her decades-long effort to become America's first woman president, no matter what the cost. He produces secret documents and stunning evidence to show just how much she has been willing to lie, bully, cheat, and manipulate people in her quest for power. He provides shocking new accounts of key moments in Hillary's private and political life—revealing, for instance, what Hillary knew and when she knew it during her years as first lady, especially during her husband's impeachment. He also proves that she lied to America in her bestselling autobiography *Living History.*

*The Truth About Hillary* has been embraced as the hottest political book of the year. Tony Blankley of the *Washington Times* writes, "About once a year I review a book . . . that ought to be required reading for people who care about politics. Edward Klein's *The Truth About Hillary* is such a book."

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# Becoming Bob Dylan

*From folkie to rocker to master* BY SEAN CURNYN

Bob Dylan once referred to rock critics as "40-year-olds writing about records that are geared for people that are 10 years old." He made that comment about 20 years ago, so now one must suppose that those same critics would be in their sixties or thereabouts—Dylan's own age.

The age group targeted by the average Top 40 pop song would have remained the same, however, as it's been since the dawn of the era of mass-youth-pop-culture-consumption in the 1950s. Pop music is basically made for kids. This is notwithstanding the fact that there is also a lucrative market in "classic rock" and other nostalgia categories, whereby people continue listening to and rebuying, in ever-changing formats, music that they first enjoyed as, well, children.

*Sean Curnyn is writing a book on political and moral themes in the work of Bob Dylan.*

**Like a Rolling Stone**
*Bob Dylan at the Crossroads*
by Greil Marcus
Public Affairs, 256 pp., $24

There is also, then, a market for books of analysis and criticism that seek to explain to people just why this music that they enjoyed in their teen years continues to occupy a place in their emotional universe, and, indeed, why there is no need to be ashamed of it, since there is a great deal more depth in those little ditties than may meet the eye—or ear. (And this is not to mention the ongoing reviews that must be written of all the new singles and albums hitting the market.)

Inevitably, trying to concoct serious writing about inherently unserious music can lead to self-indulgent perversities and crazy extrapolations of the imagination. This can't be helped. Consumers must be fed, and pages must be filled with words, and duly dispatched. What happens, however, when the same critic comes along and applies those same bad habits to music that is both popular *and* of serious worth?

> The first sound is so stark and surprising, every time you hear it, that the empty split-second that follows calls up the image of a house tumbling over a cliff; it calls up a void. Even before "Once upon a time," it's



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> the first suggestion of what Dylan meant when, on that night in Montreal when he was plainly too tired to bait an interviewer so uninterested in his assignment he hadn't even bothered to learn how to pronounce his subject's name, he cared enough about "Like a Rolling Stone" to seriously insist that no one had written songs before—that no one had ever tried to make as much of song, to altogether open the territory it might claim, to make a song a story, and a sound, but also the Oklahoma Land Rush.

That's a snippet (and I do mean a snippet) of what Greil Marcus writes in this book just about the moment in-between the first bang on the snare drum and the rest of Bob Dylan's 1965 recording of "Like a Rolling Stone." That song, and in particular that recording of it, is the central subject of the book.

Now, I would not be the one to try to argue that Bob Dylan's work does not deserve serious examination and appreciation. Hundreds of books have already been published, and countless others will be, inspired by what is probably the greatest single body of songwriting in the history of the United States. There is a lot that has been said, and probably a great deal more that remains to be said, about some of the most enduring and beguiling songs that one could hope to hear; songs that spring from the Bible, the blues, folk, history, poetry, and many points besides, and from a giant American creative spirit who has straddled the decades of the second half of the 20th century and continues to create interesting work now into the 21st.

But the moment of silence in-between the crack of the drum and the rest of "Like a Rolling Stone"? Do we really have to squeeze our sensibilities in there, and wallow around in the murk of the subconscious, freeze-framing each moment of perception and blowing it up to 20 x 30 poster size?

Well, that's what you'd best be prepared to do if you wish to enjoy *Like a Rolling Stone*. Greil Marcus, billed at a recent talk at Columbia as "perhaps the most celebrated writer on American popular music and culture," has made it his trademark to inhabit those spaces, and draw his readers down (or up?) there with him. As opposed to a critic who bases his analysis on some mutually understood groundwork, Marcus often demands that you cozy up inside his cranium and follow every neuron as it sparks inside what some might consider his rock'n'roll-addled brain. His own very personal response to the music is set down for the reader as being the essential one, by means of little more than bold assertion.

> As a sound the record is like a cave. You enter it in the dark; what light there is flickers off the walls in patterns that, as you watch, seem almost in rhythm. You begin to feel that you can tell just what flash will follow from the one before it. But the longer you look, the more you see, and the less fixed anything is.

Indeed.

Another thing that you may bump into while wandering around in Greil's brain is his politics. They are revealed in quite a brutal fashion in a column of his that was published the day after the 2004 election, in a fantasy obituary for George W. Bush that details (among much other bad news) millions killed because of his actions in a second term, and the Bush twins dead in a drunk-driving accident that also kills seven others. There is nothing quite as dramatic in *Like a Rolling Stone*, but Marcus's own politics cannot but inform his consideration of the work of Bob Dylan.

He explains why, on Dylan's first (eponymous) album, the preponderance of songs dealing with death was highly relevant because, in the early 1960s, death *was* real—because, you see, of the threat of nuclear annihilation and hostility to civil-rights activists—as if, somehow, death was (or is) any less real at any other time in history. Dylan has, in fact, always placed death in the central spot in his work, which it also occupies, whether faced or not, in human life. You can draw a line going from Dylan's first album of gospel and blues songs right through "It's Alright Ma" ("for them that think death's honesty won't fall upon them naturally life sometimes must get lonely") all the way to his most recent "Sugar Baby" ("look up, seek your Maker, 'fore Gabriel blows his horn"). It's one of the key aspects of his work that distinguishes it from the pop music of his contemporaries with which he has, at least on a commercial level, competed.

This notion of the stronger presence of death in the early 1960s exemplifies the inherent weaknesses in trying to put Dylan's work in a historical context, as Marcus puts some time into doing with the song "Like a Rolling Stone." Everyone knows the context of the mid-sixties—it's the most belabored and overconsidered time period of modern American history, after all. It would be far more interesting, surely, to take Dylan's work completely outside the old clichés of time and place and see how it stands for the ages, assuming the writer believes that it does.

Imagine, if you will, that Dylan had not appeared on the recording scene in 1962. He shows up, instead, 10 years later, in 1972, and, following the same chronology, releases his breakthrough "Like A Rolling Stone" in 1975. Would we now be treated to a book by Greil Marcus telling us how perfectly the album summed up the mood of post-Watergate America? "When Bob sings ('You're invisible now, you've got no secrets to conceal!') he is almost chasing Richard M. Nixon into that helicopter!"

It would be as valid as any of the juxtapositions of historical events—such as the Watts riots and the Vietnam war—with Dylan's musical output as Marcus makes here. And that's a tribute to the timelessness and power of Dylan's work to the same degree as it is a criticism of Marcus's strategy.

Marcus will benefit with this book, as he has in the past, from being the only one taking on the particular subject matter in a serious, albeit highly idiosyncratic, way. So, his previous *Invisible Republic: Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes* (1997) is commonly considered an essential work. But it's not as if there are other books on the "Base-



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ment Tapes" out there to compare with Marcus's quirky, though self-assured, vision.

Readers hungry for sheer information will enjoy aspects of this book, even if they are left feeling a little used by some of the flights of fancy. Dylan did not grant Marcus an interview, but he was allowed to listen to the complete recording-session tapes for "Like a Rolling Stone." Marcus makes his transcriptions and observations about those recordings the epilogue—and it's fascinating stuff for any dedicated fan. Marcus does well in conveying the spirit of the musicians, the singer, and the producer pursuing something mercurial that insists on slipping away again and again. Even when they've achieved what becomes the master take, they continue; but instead of improving upon that performance, it only gets farther away from them. Although the production is credited solely to the late Tom Wilson, Marcus suggests that Dylan's later producer, Bob Johnston, made key changes to the mix before its release—a theory endorsed (though not trumpeted ungraciously) by Johnston himself, who was interviewed for the book.

Marcus also displays his wide musical knowledge throughout, exploring a variety of connections, spiritual and otherwise, to Dylan and, in particular, to "Like a Rolling Stone": from Son House to Chuck Berry and Leon Payne. There are countless paths to wander when you enter that forest, but certainly the most audacious line Marcus draws is one connecting, on some metaphysical plane, Dylan's 1965 recording of "Like a Rolling Stone" and the Pet Shop Boys' 1993 pop hit "Go West," a song originally done by the Village People.

> There are songs that truly take place in the country "Like A Rolling Stone" opens up—that follow the trail left by the way of life the song calls for, that it demands, the cutting of all ties, the refusal of all comforts, even your own name.

"The way of life the song calls for"? Again, we're somewhere in Marcus's skull, but not too sure whether we want to linger. His characteristic bold assertion aside, he offers no real evidence that Dylan "demands" his listeners follow any particular way of life. The song is certainly about what you might call an extreme moment of liberation or maturation—one that is, at once, terrifying and exhilarating. Like many of Dylan's greatest songs, it sounds one way when you assume it is directed at some hapless subject of his scrutiny, but opens up on quite different levels when you consider that the singer may be directing his lines at himself.

> *You used to be so amused*
> *At Napoleon in rags and the language that he used*
> *Go to him now, he calls you, you can't refuse*
> *When you got nothing, you got nothing to lose*
> *You're invisible now, you got no secrets to conceal.*
> *How does it feel*
> *How does it feel*
> *To be on your own*
> *With no direction home*
> *Like a complete unknown*
> *Like a rolling stone?*

The young Bob Dylan had crammed a great deal into his career to this date. He had written songs as varied and enduring as "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Mr. Tambourine Man"—songs good enough by themselves to justify most writers' careers—but at this point his talent was launching itself to a whole new level. Already the subject of real ire from people who accused him of abandoning folk/protest music, he was now facing the noisy hatred of those who would accuse him of committing some Judas-like sin for playing an electric instrument. For a 25-year-old trying to keep his head on straight and shepherd a wild creativity within, it had to be disturbing stuff. With "Like a Rolling Stone," he lifted himself artistically to the point he had to reach in order to give his talent its needed outlet—and managed to sing about that terrifying and liberating moment at the same time. Effecting the transformation, and crystallizing it, simultaneously, in a song. Quite a special achievement, in a body of work replete with them. ♦

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**At the Newport Folk Festival, 1965**



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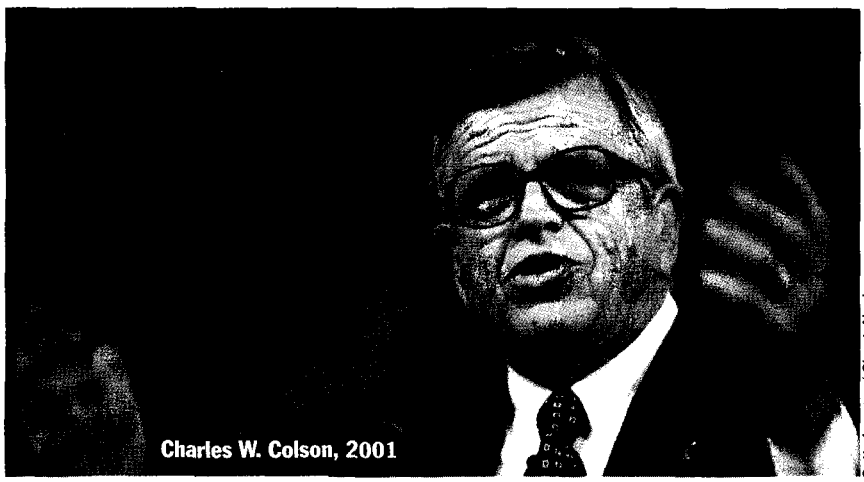
# God's Warden

*How Charles Colson went from Watergate villain to Christian hero.* **BY JOSEPH LOCONTE**



Charles W. Colson, 2001

Getty Images / Chuck Nacke

Whenever liberals are in a mood to warn Americans about the frightful threat of conservative Christianity, they round up the usual suspects: Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, or perhaps some wild-eyed sniper at an abortion clinic. One name they never bring up is Charles Colson.

**Charles W. Colson**
*A Life Redeemed*
by Jonathan Aitken
WaterBrook, 448 pp., $24.95

No wonder. The celebrated born-again Christian—a former Nixon tough guy who did prison time for his part in Watergate—has spent three decades ministering to inmates and their families. It might easily have never happened: Colson's conversion story almost lured him into the burgeoning subculture of celebrity Christianity. Instead, he founded Prison Fellowship and plunged into the world of barbed wire, watchtowers, and cell blocks.

Along the way, Colson has become one of the most influential evangelicals of his generation, especially in the era of the Bush White House. Yet he's never forgotten his experience behind bars, as anyone who has traveled with him into prisons can attest. Here is an evangelist to the core, a thoroughly converted man. "By anybody's certification, it stuck," religious historian Martin Marty once said of him. "It is very deep, very profound, very tested."

In *Charles W. Colson: A Life Redeemed*, Jonathan Aitken offers a character sketch of Colson's journey to the pinnacle of power, then disgrace, vilification—and restoration. It's a task for which Aitken is uniquely suited. A former member of parliament whose perjury conviction ended his own political career, he himself has converted to Christianity, making big news inside and outside of church circles. This allows Aitken to trace Colson's spiritual trek with care, though at times it may make his writing a little opaque to the uninitiated.

Aitken devotes about half the book to the years before Colson's crisis of faith. He reveals, for example, the young Boston lawyer who scorns the establishment by hiring an African American as his partner. Yet there's also Colson the Republican ideologue who orchestrated smear campaigns against Democratic opponents. By the time he arrived as special adviser in the Nixon White House, he was as enamored with the promise of politics—what Hillary Clinton once called the "politics of meaning"—as anyone could be.

Then came the crash. At the height of the Watergate scandal, Colson turned to an old friend for counsel, Raytheon president Tom Phillips. What he heard, instead, was the religious equivalent of a *habeas corpus*: a riveting and incriminating description of the sin of pride, drawn from the pages of C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity.* As Aitken tells it, Nixon's "hatchet man" needed more than an emotional appeal to repent and believe, and Lewis—the premier Christian apologist of the 20th century—gave it to him. Since then, Colson has written or coauthored 23 books on topics ranging from crime to Christian theology. Few evangelical leaders have spent as much time arguing that the intellectual life be cultivated for the glory of God.

Aitken's treatment of Colson the social reformer forms the heart of the book. It is thorough and fair-minded, though not as richly drawn as it might be. Aitken only begins to suggest the profound conceptual challenges that Colson's ministry presents to both left and right.

For decades now, leaders of the religious left, from Jesse Jackson to Jim Wallis, have raised their self-described "prophetic voice" on behalf of the poor. What that voice usually demands is more government spending for secular social services. So they create ad campaigns, assemble political action groups, and get themselves arrested at rallies in Lafayette Park. Not Colson. He just keeps inventing new ways for churches to help inmates and their families recover from the blight of crime.

Church-based voluntarism is the key. Founded in 1976, Prison Fellow-

*Joseph Loconte, the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at the Heritage Foundation, is editor of* The End of Illusions: Religious Leaders Confront Hitler's Gathering Storm.



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ship now offers religious and educational programs to inmates in over 800 prisons in 40 countries. The Angel Tree Ministry, a staple of local churches across denominational lines, delivers 600,000 gifts each year to the children of prisoners. Colson's program for ex-offenders, which pairs volunteers with former inmates to help them find jobs and housing, has gotten support from the Bush White House. There's even a program for the victims of crime. All counted, Prison Fellowship sustains a $50 million budget, with over 300 staff and nearly 24,000 volunteers, virtually all privately supported.

Colson's theology presents a more fundamental challenge to liberalism. All of his work among criminals is anchored in the core doctrines of evangelical Christianity. The taproot of crime, he says, is sin—not economic injustice. Thus, "rehabilitation" depends, ultimately, on personal repentance and faith in Jesus. Aitken, who followed Colson into several prisons, effectively describes how he establishes rapport with inmates and brings a message of hope and redemption, even to those on death row.

"You and I know about tombs, because prisons are the tombs of our society and we're in one now," he tells Texas inmates at an Easter Sunday service. "But you and I also know that the only way to come out of these hellholes, these tombs, is by knowing the risen Lord."

If Colson's initiatives upset the secular assumptions of the left, he also unsettles the political and religious right. Consider, again, the issue of crime. Conservatives may be more likely than liberals to talk about sin, but they also love incarcerating sinners. The problem with that, Colson says, is that most prisoners will be released—but probably unprepared for life on the outside. So he's elevated the concept of "restorative justice," the idea that offenders must be held accountable to their victims, make restitution, and even be reconciled when possible. This is how Prison Fellowship turns convicts into citizens.

Or take the issue of the culture wars. Colson is one of the few evangelical leaders willing to chide his brethren for their all-or-nothing approach to politics: They either behave as if politics can usher in the kingdom of heaven or withdraw from politics altogether. Aitken gives due attention to a long and serious interest in cultural renewal. Colson's conclusion: It won't happen until Christians think responsibly about how their beliefs should shape the contours of modern life—intellectually, socially, and politically. It's not a message, however, that makes for flashy fundraising letters.

One story Aitken recounts captures Colson's sanctified grit. He was in Georgetown University Hospital, recovering from a painful stomach tumor. He learned that, in a room just above him, was former CIA Director William Casey, a friend since his days with Nixon. Casey was on his deathbed. Colson, with his intravenous drip in hand, got cleared by CIA guards and slipped into his room. Casey couldn't utter a word. But Colson took his hand, spoke with him about Jesus, and prayed with him to receive Christ as his savior. It was, he said later, "the real reason I was in that hospital."

Herein lies much of Colson's appeal. It's not just his track record of translating his beliefs about God into visible acts of mercy. For Colson, Christian faith must be informed by reason, conscience, empathy, and experience. The English poet Thomas Traherne once remarked that "he who thinks well serves God in his inmost court." It's an insight that many Christians arguably ignore. Chuck Colson learned it early in his walk of faith, and thousands would consider themselves blessed by his discovery. ♦

# The Miracle Cure

*What an exorcist knew about human nature.*

**BY STEVEN OZMENT**

This often riveting book is a micro-historical study of credulity and reason in the German Enlightenment of the late 18th century. H.C. Erik Midelfort's subject is a short, balding, rotund Roman Catholic priest named Johann Joseph Gassner (1727-1779), who conducted spectacular and controversial exorcisms in southern Germany between 1760 and 1776.

**Exorcism and Enlightenment**
*Johann Joseph Gassner and the Demons of Eighteenth-Century Germany*
by H.C. Erik Midelfort
Yale University, 240 pp., $35

Plagued by head aches and fainting spells early in his career whenever he had to preach or say Mass, and finding no relief in contemporary medicine, Gassner developed his own personal cure. Convinced that his ailments were caused by the devil, he invoked the Name of Jesus and privately, over time, cured himself. Like Ignatius of Loyola, who extended to others "spiritual exercises" he invented to control the pain of wounds received in youthful battle, Gassner, who studied with the Jesuits, applied his personal techniques to "thousands and tens of thousands" of lay patients who sought his blessing and cure.

In the 1760s, his patients were the biblically afflicted: epileptics, the crippled, and the blind. By the peak years of his healing, 1774-1776, he treated any and all natural illnesses as demonic. In Gassner's doing so, Midelfort sees the famous exorcist accommodat-

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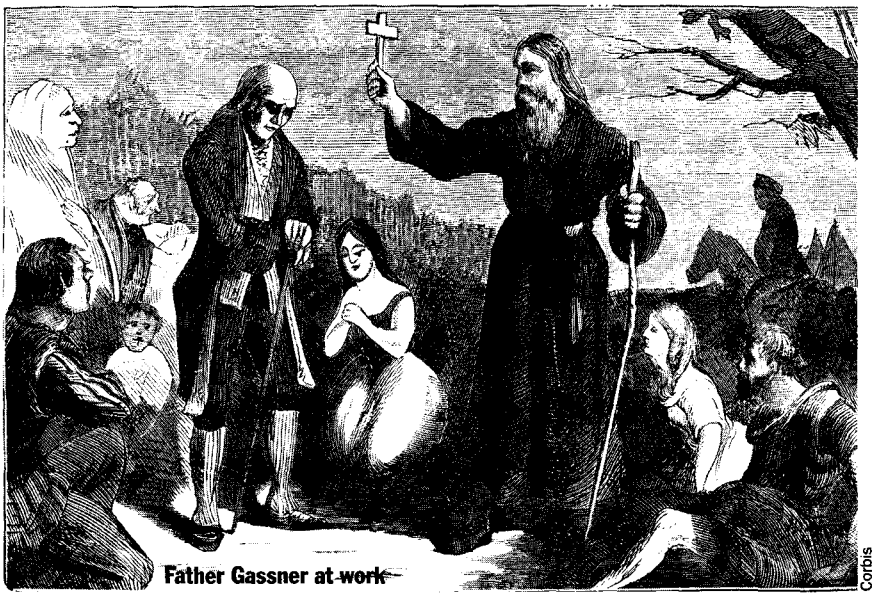
Father Gassner at work

Corbis

ing the Enlightenment, whose thinkers rationalized and internalized previously transcendent religious realities and forces, deeming them all to be subjective projections of what man was, or wanted to be.

Regardless of the patient's ailment, Gassner's procedure was first to confirm the presence of the devil or a demon. Commanding both demon and patient to "move the pain around" in the patient's body, he taught the patient to associate suffering with demonic possession. From there it was a logical, and vital, step for the patient to cast out the devil, and heal himself, as Gassner had learned to do in his youth. The procedure was not so far from the traditional Sacrament of Baptism, wherein the priest, after blowing into the eyes of the infant, marking its forehead with the cross of Christ, inserting a pinch of salt in its mouth, and dabbing a mixture of sputum and dirt in its ears, commanded the devil to flee the infant and make room for the Holy Spirit.

Although his enemies feared Gassner would revive witchcraft and the witch trials of the 16th and 17th centuries, he denied that witches had human agency and that demonic possession was supernatural behavior, "naturalizing" both in the spirit of the Enlightenment. Because he viewed the devil as an integrated part of the natural world, he could comfortably trace any human illness to him.

Gassner's downfall began in the summer of 1774, after he began a curing tour of upper Swabia. Between November 1774 and June 1775, he exorcised thousands in the city of Ellwangen, northeast of Stuttgart. By this point people came to his revivals not only to be healed, but also for "proof that traditional, unenlightened Catholicism still had some fight left."

The great tour drew the scrutiny of enlightened skeptics in the church and the universities. One standout was Franz Anton Mesmer, healer to the rich and famous, after whom Mesmerism is named. He claimed he could manipulate by touch and concentration an occult magnetic fluid in living creatures, so-called "animal magnetism," and by doing so, improve health. Describing his more popular rival as unscientific, he accused Gassner of the sincerest flattery by attributing his successes to his having stumbled, unbeknown, upon animal magnetism.

Although more people left Gassner's revivals uncured than cured, the Catholic laity loved him. Among the high Catholic officials of state and church, it was a very different story. Accused of exploiting the poor, threatening civil peace, and bringing the church "under a cloud of Enlightened ridicule," Emperor Joseph II and Pope Pius VI moved independently to defeat him totally. In November 1775 the emperor ended a popular mission in Regensburg, and in April 1776 the pope condemned him for failing to follow the church's ritual on exorcism. Forced off the healing circuit, he was confined to a small parish, where he performed only private exorcisms under watchful eyes.

Why would a distinguished modern scholar like Midelfort become enamored of an 18th-century Catholic exorcist, whom he praises as having had the "best empirical evidence" and arguments "at least as persuasive" as those of the geniuses of the Enlightenment? The apparent answer is a refreshing one: Midelfort believes Gassner had the truer insight into historic human nature.

"Demonic possession," he writes, "actually 'made sense' in the late 18th century and [Gassner's] conceptual framework of demons provided a way of understanding evil, sickness, and hardship in a structure we have mostly dismantled, but for which we have not really found any substitute." Gassner effectively "taught tormented people to intensify and then to dismiss their pains themselves," a boot strapping philosophy for the worst of times.

Midelfort, whose previous work has explored the humane side of the history of illness and madness, also expresses the historian's fear of being "censured by modernity into leaping to a ready-made, modern, medical-psychiatric explanation [that] prevents the historian from hearing what all his historical subjects are talking about."

Midelfort reminds us that we still live in a world where some believe in demons and miracles, while others see an orderly, disenchanted process. He also reminds historians that they do not have to choose between these two worlds—an appropriate reminder after having demonstrated how interesting a historian's work can be when he doesn't.

One may add that the reader also need not choose between these two worlds. In a life where sin, death, and the devil seem so often to have the upper hand, one surely forsakes transcendence at great peril. That was what the great 18th-century exorcist Gassner knew. ♦



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# Moses Revealed

*He was more than a successful manager.*

BY WALLER R. NEWELL

The re-publication of Aaron Wildavsky's *Moses as Political Leader*, first published in 1984, is a welcome event. It is a vigorous effort to reclaim for the social sciences an understanding of statesmanship and its connection to a particular regime.

Since its first appearance, the social sciences have grown even more oblivious to these themes, and so the book is more timely than ever. But, more important, it is also an attempt to restore revelation, and specifically Jewish revelation, as a source of profound reflection on statecraft. Does Wildavsky succeed in doing both? Admirable as the book is in many ways, I cannot determine whether the author is using social science to illuminate revelation or revelation to illuminate social science.

**Moses as Political Leader**
by Aaron Wildavsky
Shalem, 325 pp., $16.95

Wildavsky's main premise is compelling. Different kinds of regimes require different kinds of statesmanship. Moses' career from the Exodus to the edge of the Promised Land is a "primer" in government because it spans four major regimes in succession, and shows what kind of statesmanship is appropriate to each.

Beginning with the negative example of the Pharaoh's absolute monarchy, Moses' leadership evolves from anarchy (the initial phase in the Wilderness) to equity (an egalitarian republic) to a prudent blend of equity and hierarchy, which Wildavsky regards as the Biblical antecedent of modern social democracy. Because these archetypes evolve in response to the challenges faced by Moses under radically shifting conditions of hardship, hope, success, and demoralization, "the Bible presents as wide a panorama as can be found" of the "extent and limits of leadership under different types of rule."

This review could stop here if this were only a book about leadership. But Wildavsky has a much broader aim: to restore revelation as a source of political wisdom. His approach to Moses, however, undermines this aim. It is Wildavsky himself who insists that the "sacerdotal" aspects of Moses' leadership be separated from his strictly pragmatic success: "This is not a book about religion, except insofar as it is necessary to illuminate the cultural context within which Moses acted."

Moreover, his treatment is drenched in the language of modern, value-free social science. Wildavsky's own treatment, therefore, calls into question whether the Torah *as revelation* is valuable as a study in leadership, and whether, conversely, studying Moses' pragmatic successes and failures as a leader does much to deepen our understanding of his place in revelation.

Maimonides called Moses the greatest of all the prophets. But throughout his book, Wildavsky sacrifices Moses' status as a prophet to his role as a model for leadership theory. Moses emerges as a secular leader in exactly the way he is presented by early modern critics of revelation, like Machiavelli and Spinoza: a great founder who, like Cyrus the Great or Romulus, used force judiciously and rewrote history (including religious revelation) to unite his people and legitimize his own actions retroactively.

According to Wildavsky, leaders "have no way of maintaining the support of their followers except by claiming divine inspiration." But this is as true of Augustus Caesar or Constantine as it is of Moses. Leadership "must be charismatic, touched by the divine spirit." But this Weberian term was coined to explain usurpers like Oedipus, who have a special need for divine propaganda to overcome their lack of hereditary legitimacy.

Moses was "making history," writes Wildavsky. Moses stops short of the Promised Land so that the Hebrews can be free of his overwhelming prestige and therefore "make their own history." One must wonder whether this existentialist language, which attributes to mortal human beings the god-like capacity to "make" events, has any place in a discussion of Moses. It was often claimed on behalf of Napoleon and Stalin that they were "making history." Just as Spinoza, in his interpretation of Moses, reduced the ceremonial laws to mechanisms of social unity and control, Wildavsky says a leader must "create" a "culture" based on "perceptions of purity" so as to "enforce" good conduct. But did Moses "create" the ceremonial laws on the basis of his own will? And were they based on mere "perceptions" of purity, as if all that matters is that a certain code be widely accepted regardless of whether it is true?

What Wildavsky says of Moses could as readily be said of any successful conqueror and ruler from Caesar to Napoleon.

Wildavsky's attempt to do justice to Moses as a statesman is undermined by this relativistic, watered-down Nietzschean lingo imported from the social sciences. The problem is clearest in his treatment of God's revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai. He interprets God's utterance—"I am that I am"—as meaning that Moses' "desire to over-identify with God must be continually circumscribed" because God cannot be limited. The need to curb Moses' hubris may be one lesson. But isn't the larger question about whether and to

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what extent revelation can *ever* become a fixed political authority, given that God is beyond all natural constraints?

This difficulty is even more disturbingly evoked by the binding of Isaac, which may be God's reminder that He is never to be understood as constrained by his own covenant with man (in this case, the prohibition against human sacrifice). As the source of the gift of the law, God can never be subordinated to the law he creates. Whereas Wildavsky wishes to separate the mystery of God from the demands of political leadership, the possibility that they may conflict on the level of man's encounter with the divine *is* arguably the political wisdom of the Torah. But because Wildavsky is in thrall to the lingo of the social sciences, revelation comes perilously close to being an ideology to justify Moses' "struggle for identity" and "dynamic view of history."

His language is straight out of Machiavelli: "Moses re-creates a past on which to base a future for his people . . . history is re-written by selective attention."

What it comes down to, in the end, is: Do we admire Moses because he was a brilliant example of leadership? Or do we venerate him because he was God's chosen, and for this reason a brilliant leader? Wildavsky clearly embraces the first alternative, not so clearly the second. And yet it would seem as if the Torah maintains an inscrutable and even terrifying disjunction between God's call to his people's faith and how that call must be translated into the hard exigencies Moses faces in his struggle toward the Promised Land. The silent *aleph* that opens God's revelation may have contained the entire Torah, or the Ten Commandments—or not. There is no scriptural proof for either tradition. The divine/human conversation remains a mystery. What did God and Moses each bring to the conversation? Was God's communication silent? Of these awful and inspiring questions Wildavsky's book has little to tell us.

At bottom, Wildavsky is not really attempting to restore revelation as an alternative, or even superior, source of political reflection but is, instead, returning to an earlier, more robust and realistic *modern* and, indeed, *secular* account of leadership. Although Machiavelli and Spinoza are not mentioned, Wildavsky is returning behind the veil of more recent delusions about world peace and the nastiness of thinking about political power to their accounts of Moses, which do exactly what Wildavsky claims: By stripping Moses of his "sacerdotal" aspect, they bring to the fore his courage, prudence, and ingenuity as a ruler.

Like Machiavelli, whose wisdom he explicitly acknowledges, Spinoza gives a pragmatic, this-worldly account of Moses in order to deflate the claims of revelation. Wildavsky is entirely justified in returning to this early modern realism to combat the squeamishness of today's social sciences with regard to great leaders. But instead of, as he imagines, restoring the perspective of revelation, he is aiding Machiavelli and Spinoza in deflating it. The aim of the early modern thinkers in presenting the realistic Moses (the "armed prophet," as Machiavelli calls him) was to *tame* the politics of the Torah by separating them from the nonnegotiable zeal and righteousness sustained by a faith in God and God's justice.

The problem is not that our failure to appreciate Moses as a "leader" blinds us to the wisdom of revelation as a guide for just politics. The problem is that reducing Moses to a "leader" blinds us to the wisdom of revelation as a guide for politics and everything else. It takes nothing away from the considerable merits of *Moses as Political Leader* to conclude that it returns us to the cusp of this ongoing problem. ♦

# Lord of the Ring

## *Rediscovering the author of 'Million Dollar Baby.'*

**BY BRIAN MURRAY**

F. X. Toole made excellent copy. He was, for starters, a study in persistence—an ambitious fiction writer who plugged away for more than 40 years without notching a single publication. In the meantime, he also compiled a rather varied *curriculum vitae*: actor, bullfighter, cabdriver, bartender. Toole was 49 when he took up boxing, but when cracked teeth and heart surgery finally made him stop, he became a trainer and licensed cut man who, for nearly two decades, worked with aspiring fighters in the gyms of Los Angeles.

Toole was 70 when his first book, *Rope Burns*, a collection of boxing stories, appeared to enthusiastic reviews. For decades, Toole couldn't give his stuff away, and then suddenly he was hot property, the subject of feature stories and interviews. Pete Hamill compared him to Hemingway.

Toole—whose real name was Jerry Boyd—died in 2002, and *Rope Burns*, like nearly all story collections, wound up on remainder tables alongside books about card tricks and yoga. But interest in Toole revived when Clint Eastwood used two stories from *Rope Burns* as the basis for this year's Oscar-winning film *Million Dollar Baby*, now available on video and DVD.

Back in 2000 I invited Toole to give a reading at Loyola College in Baltimore. A practicing Roman Catholic, Toole told me over the phone that he was honored to appear at a Jesuit school. But he seemed apprehensive, too. After

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all, as Jerry Boyd, he was a familiar figure on the California fight scene. But as F.X. Toole he was still something of an upstart—a self-taught storyteller who gave few public readings, and apparently found the prospect of a university audience somewhat daunting. Somebody, perhaps, might suckerpunch him with a question about Derridean theory, or the proper use of the past perfect tense.

At the airport I found a tall, broad-shouldered man carrying a gym bag and a copy of Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*. With his thick glasses and trimmed white beard, Toole might have passed for an eminent academic; but something about the faded windbreaker and high-topped sports shoes gave him away. He demanded immediately: When was he going to get paid? A blunt request, perhaps, but not a surprising one from a man who'd spent 20 years in the fight game.

Driving Toole through Baltimore I pointed to some of the popular sights: the Inner Harbor, Lexington Market, and the National Shrine of St. Jude—the only place really to catch his eye. The next day Toole returned to the shrine, for the apostle and patron saint of desperate causes had, he admitted, "saved my ass" many times. In his foreword to *Rope Burns*—now back in print as *Million Dollar Baby*—Toole notes that he was long "into the sauce" and on close terms with more than a few deadly sins.

Toole's public reading proved memorable, for it wasn't much of a reading at all. He spoke of his long struggle to get published, and like a good commencement speaker, urged the students in the audience always to persevere. He invoked some of his own intellectual heroes and, like a guy who probably had lectured too often from atop a bar stool, launched into a discourse spiked (as I recall) with not-wholly-fused allusions to Miguel de Unamuno and Thomas Hobbes.

Finally, the hour nearly gone, Toole turned to "Million $$$ Baby," the basis for Eastwood's film. Toole went straight to the part in which a badly battered fighter, Maggie Fitzgerald, begs her trainer, Frankie Dunn, for help in ending her life. As he read, very effectively, Toole's voice broke. He was, he once admitted, "a sentimental Irish romantic at heart."

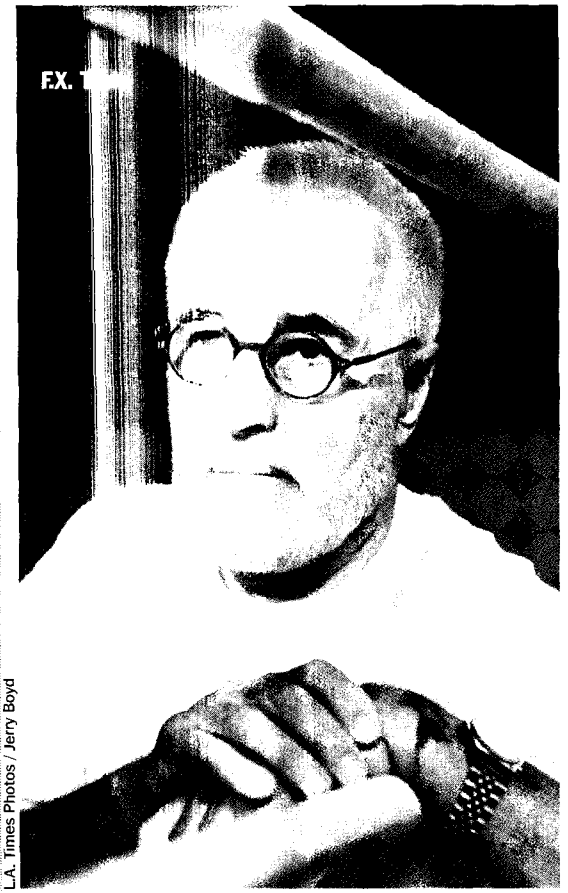
Toole came to boxing through his father, who "took heart" from the careers of such great Irish fighters as Jim Corbett, John L. Sullivan, Gene Tunney, and Billy Conn. Toole would recall how, as a boy, he listened to the fights on the radio, and felt drawn to the "magic . . . [of] men in combat, the magic of will, and skill, and pain. And risking everything so you can respect yourself later in life." Late in his own life, Toole called boxing "a game where old men can still go to war."

Toole relished his role with young fighters, most of them Latin or African American. The fight world, of course, has long been marked by the generally easy association of black, white, and brown: It was multicultural before multicultural was cool. (It's not, however, politically correct; hence, the perennial pursuit of a "great white hope" to prompt other whites, great or not, to come streaming to the gate. And veteran trainers are still likely to ponder and weigh the presumed ethnic quirks of fighters who come under their sway. Thus, Lou Duva, recalling his success with certain Latin fighters, once theorized that "Mexicans are more or less related to me as an Italian.")

In Toole's stories, seasoned cutmen—men very much like Toole himself—go to war with gear bags filled with the tools of their trade: sponges, swabs, ice bags, cocoa butter, adrenaline, even Murray's pomade, used to make the skin slick and plug up cheekbone wounds. And Toole's trainers treat their fighters like their own children, with firmness but endless care.

"These kids," Toole wrote, "put their lives in your hands."

In the volume's title story, "Rope Burns," a Toole-like trainer, Mac McGee, schools Henry "Puddin" Pye, who is a young black contender and a trainer's dream. When Puddin is murdered by a thug whose brain is "toasted" by crack cocaine, Mac—an ex-cop who still packs a handgun—takes his revenge in a scene that could have been scripted by Quentin Tarantino: Blood




L.A. Times Photos / Jerry Boyd

sprays as the Glocks and Magnums blast away.

Toole's boxing scenes ring very true; after 20 years in the corner, this writer knows what fighters do before, during, and after they enter the ring. But Toole can be cartoonish, too, particularly when one of his personae, like Mac or Frankie Dunn, gets tough with his fists or a gun. Toole, we're reminded, really did teach himself to write far from the literary mainstream, and the result—part poetry, part pulp—has a crude but honest charm. It might recall Hemingway, but there's a fair bit of O. Henry in this soup, and more than a dash of Mickey Spillane.

"Million $$$ Baby" begins by recalling the sort of old boxing movies in which James Cagney battles for his sweetheart, or William Holden puts down his violin to fight for the crown. Here, once again, is the raw but earnest contender and the gruff trainer with the heart of gold. Here is their dogged pursuit of a long-shot dream.

It's not surprising that Toole's story appealed to Eastwood, a smart director drawn not only to traditional genres, but to ironic stories about misguided men stumbling into the murk of their own moral doom. In *Mystic River*



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(2003), Jimmy Markum, played by Sean Penn, mourning the death of his daughter, makes a dreadful mistake when he turns his need for justice into an act of revenge against an innocent man.

*Unforgiven* (1992), Eastwood's best film, is also linked thematically to *Million Dollar Baby*. Here, William Munny is an ex-gunslinger who, out of respect for his dead wife, has packed up his guns and turned to pig farming instead. But his resolve breaks when he joins a posse hired to avenge the assault of a prostitute in a nearby town. Munny plans to use his share of the reward money to assist his children, a dicey move for a man of such uncertain virtue. *Unforgiven* unfolds with relentless, tragic certainty, ending in a flood of blood and, it appears, Munny's complete moral demise.

Dunn similarly descends. At first, he refuses to train Maggie Fitzgerald, citing his own pugilistic code. He doesn't train girls because watching them get busted up "went against everything he believed in." Besides, there are too many complications, such as "scheduling fights around periods. And bruised tits. And what if one was pregnant and had a miscarriage because of a fight?" Frankie wants to keep his conscience clean.

When Frankie was a kid, boxing meant the likes of Joe Louis, Tony Zale, and James Braddock, the hero of Ron Howard's earnest but cliché-ridden *Cinderella Man*. In public, at least, fighters like these exemplified what so many have found alluring about "the sweet science of bruising." Sportswriter Hugh McIlvanney once wrote that "boxing's final validity . . . is as a context for courage and nobility of spirit. Most boxers are well worth knowing. They are like men who have been to war. Maybe we should not have prize fights, but those who have been involved in either have an extra dimension of experience. They have been to a frontier that most of us can only know vicariously."

But women's boxing, Frankie knows, tends to pander to the sport's tawdry side. Women fighters come from a small talent pool; they're mostly ill-trained and often mismatched. Lacking force, they throw windmills, like kids in a schoolyard—much to the merriment of fans who, all things considered, would be just as content watching a pair of combatants in thongs slipping half-nelsons in a tub full of mud. Women's bouts are "more like dog fights," Frankie asserts, "freak shows."

Maggie is one of the exceptions—a serious, spirited mix of goodness and guts. Maggie respects Frankie, treating him like the father she loved and lost. For Frankie, Maggie is the devoted daughter (and sure-thing contender) he's never had. Frankie wants Maggie to be "the first Million Dollar Baby, wanted her to be somebody before she hung up her gloves, so she'd always be somebody afterward."

Love, in other words, means never ducking the next big foe. Frankie lands Maggie a fight with Billy "The Blue Bear" Astrakhov, a "masculine-looking" Russian girl who has become the sport's biggest draw. Thus, the trainer who hated watching women punch each other now puts his own adored fighter against a rival notorious for dirty tricks and glaring fouls. It's the classic sports film set-up—good versus evil—and evil wins. Maggie ends up "a permanent, vent-dependent quadriplegic unable to breathe without a respirator." And Frankie helps destroy what he helped create. In this film, as in *Unforgiven*, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

The late trainer Bill Slayton once said that boxing "has some of the most rotten people you'll ever meet." It's not a fact Toole chooses to stress, even though, like many romantics and melancholics, he seems to have been readily disappointed by life's bitter realities. One of Toole's aging trainers describes himself as living in a world "that cared less and less about the things he cared about more and more," like loyalty, honesty, God. In *Rope Burns*, the world of boxing is grimy but not without its moments of kindness and hope, affording solace and the chance of redemption to at least some who enter its odd fraternity. Toole himself believed that boxing had saved his life.

But of course, Toole also knew that, for most professional boxers, the fight game finally offers nothing more than a "one-way ticket to Palookaville." As such, Toole's stories—unlike, say, the boxing essays of George Plimpton or A.J. Liebling—are without moments of true levity. They belong to the darker stream of boxing literature, where the readers find such novels as Budd Schulberg's *The Harder They Fall* and Leonard Gardner's *Fat City*, which Joyce Carol Oates aptly calls "a handbook of sorts in failure, in which boxing functions as the natural activity of men totally unequipped to comprehend life."

"Million $$$ Baby" was partly inspired by one of boxing's more recent catastrophes, a one-sided match in 1996 that left a Missouri woman mauled and permanently disabled. Ironically, the first death in women's boxing occurred during an amateur match in Colorado last April, just weeks after *Million Dollar Baby* won its four Academy Awards.

This event prompted two neurologists to challenge the new popularity of "lady fighters," as they used to be known. Writing in the *New York Times*, Julian Bailes and Vincent Miele suggested that women boxers are more vulnerable to head injuries, not only because of their general lack of adequate preparation, but because their "smaller neck musculature" makes them less able to absorb hard blows to the head. And yet, thanks to Toole's story and Eastwood's film, interest in women's boxing continues to spread internationally. The sport's advocates argue, not unreasonably, that more women fighters will inevitably lead to better-trained women fighters more deft in the art of defense. And they are pushing hard to add women's boxing to the 2008 Olympic Games.

What Toole would make of this is hard to say. As Jerry Boyd, he worked with several women fighters, and like Frankie Dunn, urged them to excel without compromise. But as F.X. Toole, he also chose, as his epigraph to *Rope Burns*, these words of Joyce Carol Oates: "Boxing is for men, and is about men, and *is* men. A celebration of the lost religion of masculinity all the more trenchant for being lost." ♦



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## Books in Brief

***Beethoven: The Universal Composer* by Edmund Morris (HarperCollins, 256 pp., $21.95)** In this brief biography of Ludwig van Beethoven, Edmund Morris sheds new light on the composer, not by refuting the common perception of a frenzied, misanthropic genius, but by fleshing it out in meticulous detail.

Morris situates his subject within a colorful historical context, showing Beethoven's career trajectory as a product of developments in Viennese society and Napoleonic expansion. And his strength as a biographer lies in capturing the broadness of Beethoven's appeal: "Climb the mildewed stairway of the most obscure building he ever lived in, and you can be fairly sure of bumping into a Welsh choral society or a party of reverent Japanese."

Much as he did in his biographies of Theodore Roosevelt, Morris combines the minute details of Beethoven's life (financial ledgers, compositional etchings, etc.) with an understanding of his timeless gravitas. This engaging approach involves constantly adjusting the scope of his expository lens, by turns revealing the forest and the trees of Beethoven's life and art. This technique is similar to the composer's own, whose works manage to be "microscopic as well as telescopic . . . cells and cathedrals of sound." Morris supposes that it was this breadth of Beethoven's sonic senses, this "ability to embrace the whole range of human emotion, from dread of death to love of life," that gives his music its uncontested place in the history of art.

If Beethoven's music comprised a clash of opposites, this was largely emblematic of the tempestuous state of the composer himself. That enormous body of work was the product of a troubled mind, plagued by fits of paranoia and rage. Resisting the temptation to romanticize his subject, Morris shows him to be as bitterly conniving as he was prolific. Nor does Morris sentimentalize Beethoven's childhood. Previous biographers have portrayed his Bonn upbringing as the first chapter of a rags-to-riches fable; Morris asserts that Beethoven's father earned a steady if modest income, and did not become a heavy drinker until his son's teenage years.

At 21, Beethoven was sent to Vienna, where he etched out the contours of his talent under the tutelage of Franz Josef Haydn. Haydn clashed with his precocious student, whose restlessness and egoism elbowed against the constraints of Haydn's formality and condescension. Wringing some manner of discipline and formal technique out of a capricious student must have been like pulling teeth, and Haydn and other patient men should be credited with giving young Beethoven a firm grasp of the art of counterpoint, freeing him to unleash the torrent of sound welling up inside his head, a harmonious rush that grew louder as his aural connection to the outside world diminished.

No examination of Beethoven would be complete without a discussion of his deafness. Morris's inclusion of the poignant "Heiligenstadt Testament" (1802) provides a glimpse of the emotional anguish that accompanied Beethoven as his hearing diminished, capturing his fear and embarrassment: "Ah, how could I possibly admit an infirmity in the one sense which ought to be more perfect in me than in others, a sense which I once possessed in the highest perfection. . . . For me there can be no relaxation with my fellow-men, no refined conversations, no mutual exchange of ideas."

Beethoven's deafness further alienated him from companions and associates, and heightened his feelings of solitude. And for every burst of productive mania experienced by the aging composer, there seems to have been a corresponding fit of paranoia, caused either by the conviction that players were deliberately stumbling over notes, or managers were conspiring to cheat him. When he learned that Napoleon was entering Vienna, "Beethoven, desperate to protect what was left of his hearing, took refuge in [his brother's] cellar, clutching pillows to his ears." At the same time, recognition of his failing health fomented productivity: "I would have ended my life—it was only my art that held me back," he wrote. "Ah, it seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had brought forth all that I felt was within me."

The writing of these words seems to have unleashed a flood of creativity: In rapid succession over the next decade he composed "an opera, six symphonies, four solo concertos, five string quartets, six string sonatas, seven piano sonatas, five sets of piano variations, four overtures, three suites of incidental music for the stage, four trios, two sextets, seventy-two songs, an oratoria," and innumerable other pieces.

Morris creates a clear image of the man, but falters at technical analysis of Beethoven's compositions. He seems aware of his own shortcomings in this respect, quoting Hector Berlioz on the "Moonlight" Sonata as "one of those poems that human language does not know how to qualify." This does not stop him from trying to convey the Moonlight's "exploration of the most delicate possible aural nuances" and "sensuality of pure sound," coming to a head with a finale that "leaped out of the lower register of the instrument with tigerish force." But he also recognizes the hollow sound of such flowering prose: "When art conceals art . . . technical analysis seems almost impertinent."

Though Morris's critiques of Beethoven's work fall flat, the reader is likely to be more interested in the story behind the work than the work itself. Here Morris adds new dimensions to our knowledge of the solitary, contrarian Ludwig van Beethoven.

*—Abigail Lavin*



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The White House

# Parody

PRESS BRIEFING BY SCOTT McCLELLAN
James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

MR. McCLELLAN: Good afternoon. I can tell you all that the President is traveling today. Beyond that I have no announcements. I'm happy to take questions—John?

Q: With regard to recent events, Senator Clinton stated yesterday that "now is not the time for finger-pointing." Does the President agree with Mrs. Clinton and, if not, does he have his own ideas on when would be a better time for finger-pointing than right now?

MR. McCLELLAN: I can tell you that the President obviously continues to be dedicated to finding a time agreeable to all parties. As you know, the White House has outlined a plan that would have made the time for finger-pointing the fifteenth of every month at four o'clock. Not everyone was in agreement with that timetable. John? Go ahead.

Q: Was that because the scheduling conflicted with Senator Hatch and others who've been saying that now is not the time for recrimination and rebuke? I mean, was there any effort to accommodate them in such a plan?

MR. McCLELLAN: The President has agreed to work closely with those members as well and I know—I'll have to check on the sequencing here—but the suggestion was made that the time for recrimination and rebuke be set aside on the last Friday of each month, after lunch—Fridays being an easier time for most members to attend such a session than, say, mid-week. Bill?

Q: Scott, now, you just pointed your finger at me. Is that the kind of thing we're talking about here?

MR. McCLELLAN: That's your interpretation, Bill, it's not mine. Actually, I was pointing *to* you, not *at* you.

Q: On Iraq. Tony Blair told the House of Commons that, "now isn't the time for complacency or panic." What's the President's thinking on this?

MR. McCLELLAN: Those are operational areas, and I would refer you to the Pentagon. I will say, however, that we have attempted to work with our allies in the past to find mutually agreeable times for both complacency *and* panic, and I think the President's been pretty satisfied with those results. David, did you have a question?

Q: Yeah. Scott, frankly, this sort of—quote, unquote—"not the time for" thing seems to be reaching alarming proportions. I wonder if you don't have a "Timegate" crisis in the making in the President's second term. I mean, you've got some people on the Hill screaming that now is not the time for turning our backs on average working Americans. But no one seems to know when that time is. Others are insisting that now is not the time for a congressional taffy pull. And yet—

MR. McCLELLAN: Is there a question in all this, David?

Q: I wonder if the President is considering perhaps some cabinet-level oversight, maybe something like a finger-pointing czar to coordinate these various agendas.

MR. McCLELLAN: I appreciate the question, but that is not a correct characterization of the situation. Bob?

Q: Both sides of the aisle seem to agree that now is not the time for the blame game. Apart from timing, can you walk us through what the blame game will actually look like? Is it small like a board game? If it's a big thing with lots of players, obviously the Astrodome is out of the question. Does the administration have any thoughts on the actual metrics?

MR. McCLELLAN: I can only tell you that I'll be happy to bring the matter up with the President, but now is not the time.



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*In [illegible] Richard Posner examines the dangerous weaknesses in reforming our domestic intelligence and offers a solution: the creation of a new domestic intelligence agency.*

Domestic intelligence in the United States today is undermanned, understudied, undersupervised, uncoordinated, technologically challenged, tied too closely to criminal law enforcement, and (the same point, really) dominated by an agency (the FBI) that, because its primary activity is law enforcement, is structurally unsuited to play the central role in domestic national security intelligence—and all this at a time of extreme danger and vulnerability. A terrorist who wants to enter the United States can do so with relative ease either with forged documents or by being smuggled across the Canadian or Mexican borders. The U.S. government has to be able to find, follow, watch, overhear, deceive, bribe, and expose (and not just arrest and prosecute) suspected terrorists plus groups and individuals that assist them by providing safe houses, financing, weapons, or other forms of support. To this end it must collect, compare, analyze masses of data concerning foreign visitors, plants where weapons are made and stores where they are sold, laboratories where lethal pathogens and toxins are stored, locations and shipments of radioactive materials, potential targets, and much else besides. Nor can the threat posed by homegrown terrorists in the era of weapons of mass destruction be ignored.

Reorganizing the FBI cannot be the answer, given the deep tension between criminal investigation and national security intelligence. There is an urgent need for a domestic intelligence agency, modeled on the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, that would be separate from the FBI and would have no authority to engage in law enforcement. Such an agency would not draw staff from the FBI; the Bureau would retain its existing intelligence responsibilities and staff.

—from *Remaking Domestic Intelligence*

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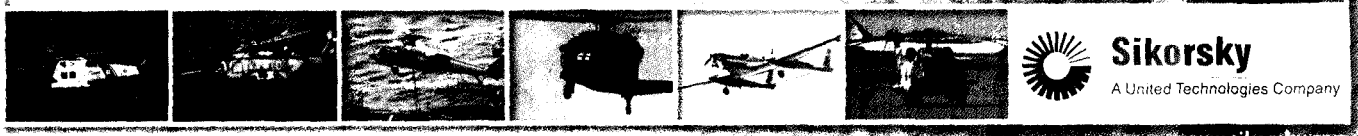

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